

REASSESSING THE EVOLVING AL-QAEDA THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING, AND TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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REASSESSING THE EVOLVING AL-QAEDA THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

Thursday, November 19, 2009

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING,
AND TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENT,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Jane Harman [Chair of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Harman, Kirkpatrick, Green, Himes, King, Broun, and Souder.

Also present: Representatives Jackson Lee, Pascrell, and Lungen.

Ms. HARMAN [presiding]. Good morning. Good morning. The subcommittee will come to order.

This subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on the current threat al-Qaeda poses to the United States. Our hearing is called, "Reassessing the Evolving al-Qaeda Threat to the Homeland."

Just over a year ago, this subcommittee held a hearing at which I noted that al-Qaeda's desire and intent to attack us remained undiminished. Peter Bergen and Lawrence Wright, both renowned terrorism experts, testified at that hearing.

Bergen asserted that al-Qaeda is losing the long-term battle for hearts and minds, but yet, has rebuilt its capacity along the Af-Pak border, and remains capable of launching large-scale attacks in the West. He predicted that the next terror attack in the United States will probably be committed by someone holding a European passport.

Wright said that al-Qaeda attacks will continue. The only real question is scale. He described the organization as adaptive, flexible, and evolutionary, and a long way from extinction.

We return to this topic today, because I, for one, believe al-Qaeda is more dangerous now than ever.

I am just back from a trip with committee staff and some other colleagues, not on this committee, to Afghanistan and Pakistan, where meetings with foreign and American intelligence officials confirm that al-Qaeda is spreading from its safe haven along the Af-Pak border into Yemen, Somalia, and the Maghreb—and into the United States.

Since 9/11, al-Qaeda has morphed from a top-down, vertically integrated entity into a loosely affiliated, horizontal structure. No doubt, we will hear more about that from Dr. Crenshaw.

Despite considerable success by the United States and allies in taking out many high-value targets, Westerners continue to train in al-Qaeda camps in the FATA. Peter Bergen is our witness again today, and he in his testimony, which he will deliver shortly, puts the number at 25 American citizens or residents who have been charged with traveling to such training camps since 9/11.

Al-Qaeda is also inspiring copy-cat-type attacks, which may be what the Hasan case is about. The “new terrorist template,” as TIME magazine calls it this week, will prove an even more difficult threat to mitigate than that posed by the original al-Qaeda.

I have been focused on this threat for 8 years—first as the Ranking Member on the House Intelligence Committee, and now as Chair of this subcommittee. In fact, my exposure to it pre-dates 9/11, as I served on the congressionally mandated Commission on Terrorism in 1999 to 2000, which predicted, along with several other studies, a major terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

There is much unfinished business. Our homeland remains vulnerable.

Recent indictments in the United States against Najibullah Zazi and David Headley are of huge concern. I am concerned. These indictments are important, and I applaud the excellent work of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies involved, including the NYPD.

Since 9/11, we have successfully tried and convicted more than 200 individuals with a history of or nexus to international terrorism—in the United States.

Consistent with this strong record, I support Attorney General Holder’s decision to refer Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other Gitmo detainees for trial in the Southern District of New York. I believe Holder’s decision was carefully considered, that our prosecutions will be successful, that all five are likely to be convicted, and that by doing it this way, we will demonstrate to the world that we live by our values—principal among them the rule of law.

Today’s hearing will update the subcommittee on the al-Qaeda threat, and we welcome back Mr. Bergen, as well as terrorism experts Paul Pillar, Dr. Martha Crenshaw and retired General David Barno. Our witnesses seem to agree that al-Qaeda is still potent, although less capable of pulling off an attack of the same magnitude or larger than 9/11.

It is Mr. Bergen’s assessment that al-Qaeda now poses a “second order threat in which the worst case would be an al-Qaeda-trained or inspired attack.”

Mr. Pillar cites the importance of placing the threat from al-Qaeda within a larger context, one that includes other radical Islamist cells and individuals that may be motivated by grievances and sentiment al-Qaeda seeks to exploit. General Barno agrees.

Finally, Dr. Crenshaw, who, as I mentioned, briefed us several weeks ago, asserts that sponsoring terrorist attacks in the West is an ideological imperative essential to the al-Qaeda identity and brand.

I personally hope that President Obama's emerging Pak-Af strategy—and my emphasis on Pak is deliberate—will include a broad strategy for targeting al-Qaeda and any other terror group with worldwide reach, and mitigating their threat to the United States.

I look forward to a very, very useful conversation, and want to welcome all of you.

I will now recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. King, who is Ranking Member of the full committee, who is sitting in for the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, for an opening statement.

Before I do that, without objection, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pascrell, is authorized to sit on the dais for the purpose of questioning witnesses during the hearing today.

Hearing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madame Chair.

I, like you, remember the hearing that was held back in, I guess, the summer 2008. It was a fascinating hearing. I look forward to similar testimony here today, of similar insights today.

To a large extent, I agree with what the Chair said. I also believe that al-Qaeda central, if you will, is much diminished since September 11. However, al-Qaeda has more. I do believe that. As we saw in London, Madrid—certainly in London—it is second and third generation. It is homegrown terrorists we have to be concerned about.

Just in my own region, on Long Island, right outside my district, there was the Vinas case of a young man who was actually trained in an al-Qaeda camp.

I think, Mr. Bergen, in your testimony you point out that our intelligence community has not been able to locate these camps, but a not particularly bright person from New York was able to find his way over there and receive the training, and which raises all sorts of questions. But it also shows that he was homegrown, he was active in the community, and he ended up in an al-Qaeda training camp.

We have the Fort Dix case. We have the Zazi case, which probably would have been the most serious attack since September 11, had it not been stopped. Again, it was a person who, while he was born in Afghanistan, was to a large extent raised in New York, in Queens, played high school basketball and, in many ways, you would have thought was the typical young American. Yet, he came back to engage in jihad.

Then, the Headley case in Chicago, which is very significant.

So, this does seem to be, if not a change, certainly a morphing of al-Qaeda. So, I do look forward to your testimony on that.

I know Mr. Pascrell and I have had differences on this over the years. To the extent to which the Muslim community in the United States is cooperative with law enforcement, and to the extent that they are not cooperative—I think it is a very real issue that has to be addressed, and political correctness put aside.

Which also, I think, bears on the case of Major Hasan. To me, it is extraordinary some of the evidence that was there, that no action was taken against a senior officer in the United States Army

with a security clearance. Yet, that was allowed to go on for as long as it did, leading to the tragedy which it did.

While I did not intend us to bring it up, I will have to give my response to what the Chair said about the trial in New York. I think it is a dangerous mistake. I believe that we do comply with the law when we hold military tribunals. Military tribunals are part of our law. That is what should be done when we are dealing with enemy combatants.

Also, as far as impressing the rest of the world, we had the first World Trade Center case tried in open court. We had the blind sheikh case tried in open court in the 1990s. We showed the world how honest we were, how fair we were, how just we were.

During all that time, the USS Cole attack was being planned. There was Khobar Towers. There was the African embassies—and, of course, 9/11. All during and in the aftermath of these public trials, where so much coverage was given, and obviously, it did not seem to impress anyone.

Also, much of—it was given in evidence at that trial, despite the best evidence of the prosecutors and the judges, which did help al-Qaeda. If nothing else, just the list of unindicted co-conspirators was very helpful to al-Qaeda.

I would just ask the question that Senator Graham asked yesterday. If we capture bin Laden, is he going to be questioned by the military, or by the FBI? Are we allowed to question him? If he is questioned, can he then be brought to a civilian trial? Or does he have to be brought before a military tribunal? Will the soldier on the scene who captures him—if he does capture him—know what he is to do and not do?

So, in any event, these are all issues that are probably not the purpose of today's hearing. I had not intended to bring it up, but lest my silence be interpreted as acquiescence, I thought I had to go on the record.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Again, I commend the Chair for this hearing, as for the great hearing she had in summer 2008.

I look forward to the testimony.

Ms. HARMAN. I thank the Ranking Member. We may disagree on a few issues, but not only do I have great respect for him, but I am counting on him to keep my seven children and stepchildren, and all my grandchildren safe, because they all live in New York.

Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that, under the subcommittee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record. We have large attendance here, I notice this morning, because the subject is important to all of us.

So, let me now welcome our witnesses, beginning with Mr. Peter Bergen, who is currently Schwartz senior fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington. He is also a print and television journalist, reporting for publications such as the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, and he serves as CNN's senior security analyst.

In 2008, he was an adjunct lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and has also worked as an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies, SAIS, at Johns Hopkins University. He has authored two well-known books

on al-Qaeda, "Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of bin Laden," and "The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda's Leader."

Mr. Bergen brings unique experience, and is someone that I have consulted over the years.

Welcome to the subcommittee.

Let me introduce the rest of you right now, too, and then we will go down the row.

Dr. Paul Pillar is a professor and the director of graduate studies overseeing the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. He retired in 2005 from a 28-year career in the U.S. intelligence community, his last position being national intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia.

Dr. Pillar also served on the National Intelligence Council as one of the original members of its analytic group. Dr. Pillar was a Federal executive fellow at Brookings Institution from 1999 to 2000, and is a retired officer of the U.S. Army Reserve, and whose service included a tour in Vietnam.

Dr. Martha Crenshaw is currently a senior fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, where she also works as a professor of political science. Prior to this, she worked as a professor of government at Wesleyan University from 1974 to 2007. She is a lead investigator with the National Center for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism at the University of Maryland and has served on the executive board of Women in International Security, and chaired the American Political Science Association task force on political violence and terrorism.

Finally, Lieutenant General David Barno is currently the director of Near East South Asia Center at the National Defense University. General Barno was recently appointed as the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans and Families by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

He holds degrees from West Point, Georgetown University, and the U.S. Army War College. In 2003, he deployed to Afghanistan for 19 months, commanding over 20,000 U.S. and coalition forces as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record.

I would now ask Mr. Bergen to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW,
AMERICAN STRATEGY PROGRAM, AND CO-DIRECTOR,
COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY INITIATIVE, NEW AMERICA
FOUNDATION**

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you very much for the invitation to speak. Thank you very much, Chair Harman.

We have already heard from both the Chair and also from the Ranking Member about Najibullah Zazi, Vinas, and Headley. If we had been having this discussion, I think, a year-and-a-half ago, I would have presented, I think, a much more optimistic picture of the threat, or a more sanguine picture of the threat.

But I think when you have American citizens showing up in al-Qaeda training camps, when you have somebody like Headley, who the allegation is met with senior militants in the tribal areas, was going to conduct an operation against a Danish newspaper, or may even be involved in the Mumbai attacks, we are in a kind of different frame than we might have been 18 months ago.

Chair Harman mentioned this figure which NYU is coming out with a study, the Center of Law and Security, that 25 Americans—either citizens or residents—have been convicted or charged with traveling to an overseas training camp. Now, of course, that number undercounts the real number, because, for instance, in the case of the Somali-Americans, there are probably about two dozen, most from Minnesota, who traveled to Somalia. Only three of that number have actually been charged or convicted of a crime.

So, this number undercounts the number. I think it is a fairly large number, given the fact that it is going to a training camp that really makes a difference. I mean, it is one thing to be radicalized over the Internet. Anybody can watch a beheading video, and that does not really get you anywhere in terms of becoming a serious terrorist.

If you look at the most serious terrorist attacks in the West in the last two decades, they have one thing in common, which is, at least the leader of the cell, and maybe several others, have actually gone to a war zone or gone to a jihadi training camp. If you do not have that experience, it is very hard to conduct a terrorist operation. You have to learn how to kill people, which is not something that is very natural to most people.

I am also concerned about the fact that two Americans have conducted suicide operations in Somalia. The reason I am concerned about that is, once this idea sort of becomes part of the DNA of these groups, it can come home.

The reason I say that with some certainty is the British were quite, I think, naive about the idea that British citizens would actually attack in the domestic United Kingdom—even though there had already been attacks by British citizens in Tel Aviv, a suicide attack in 2003, a suicide attack in Kashmir in 2000.

The British government officially concluded that it was very unlikely that British citizens would conduct operations at home—suicide operations. Then, of course, 7/7 happened, and that conclusion collapsed.

Which brings me to Major Hasan. We still do not know Major Hasan's exact motivations. Is he mostly an oddball with jihadist tendencies? Is he mostly a jihadist guy who is also an oddball?

We do not quite understand the proportions. But the more we know about him, the more interesting his case becomes, and the more I would put it in the jihadist column.

Here is a guy who dressed in white the morning when he went to the convenience store, the morning of the massacre. He dressed in white, which is a color associated with martyrdom in Islam. He gave away all his possessions. He told his neighbors that he was going to do God's work. He shouted "Allahu Akbar." He screamed it at the top of his lungs as he conducted this massacre.

He posted postings on the internet about suicide bombings. He made inquiries about the killings of innocents, and he also con-

tacted an al-Qaeda—basically, an al-Qaeda apologist in Yemen—a cleric.

Taken together, that, I think, adds up to a picture of somebody who is planning, essentially, a sort of jihadist death by cop.

Major Hasan raises another issue, which is, if you are somebody with jihadist tendencies, the biggest, the most favorable target for you is the U.S. military. We have had a whole series of cases that I would point to.

First of all, Abdul Hakim Mujahid—or Abdul Mujahid Hakim—a case that has not gotten enough attention yet—was a guy who shot up the Little Rock recruiting center in Arkansas earlier this summer, killing an American soldier and wounding another.

By the way, the middle name, Mujahid, it means “holy warrior.” It is a very unusual—it is not at all a common Muslim name. The fact that he changed that to make it his middle name, I think is significant.

He also traveled to Yemen. He was on the FBI’s radar screen, but managed to accumulate weapons, and then conduct an attack on this military center in broad daylight—one case.

Another case, of course, is Hasan himself. Another case, of course, is the Fort Dix case. Another case which Chair Harman knows very well is the case in Torrance, California, where a group of guys who got radicalized in prison described themselves as al-Qaeda in California and had plans to attack synagogues during Yom Kippur and U.S. military bases and recruiting stations all around the country.

So, just one final thought in the 20 seconds I have left.

I think that we may have been a little complacent about the American Muslim community, which, on average, is much better educated than most Americans, has higher incomes, does not live in ghettos. But if you look at—and therefore, looks very different from their European Muslim counterparts.

But if you look at Najibullah Zazi, who is basically, you know, a guy driving a shuttle bus at Denver airport, or the Somali-Americans who come from one of the most disadvantaged American communities, or if you look at Vinas, the guy from Long Island—you know, this is a guy, a high school drop-out.

So, the profile of these people looks a bit more similar to the profile we have seen of European Muslims who might be attracted to jihadist ideology, and 30 years ago might have been attracted to some other revolutionary ideology. But militant jihadism is the ideology of the moment that also attaches itself to attacking the United States.

[The statement of Mr. Bergen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

Chair Harman, committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My testimony aims to address the evolving threat from al-Qaeda to the homeland, to include the threat from al-Qaeda itself, groups affiliated or allied to al-Qaeda, and those “homegrown” militants influenced by al-Qaeda ideas who have no connections to any formal jihadist group. This testimony does not aim to be exhaustive but to cover the most serious cases of recent years and to provide some overall threat assessment.

Najibullah Zazi, a lanky Afghan-American man in his mid-twenties, walked into the Beauty Supply Warehouse in Aurora, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, on July 25, 2009, in a visit that was captured on a store video camera. Wearing a baseball cap and pushing a shopping cart down the aisles of the store, Zazi appeared to be just another suburban guy, although not too many suburban guys buy six bottles of Clairoxide hair bleach as Zazi did on this shopping trip. He then returned to the same store a month later where he purchased another dozen bottles of “Ms. K Liquid,” which is also a peroxide-based hair bleach. Aware that these were hardly the typical purchases of a heavily-bearded, dark-haired young man, Zazi—who had lived in the States since the age of 14—kibitzed easily with the counter staff joking that he had to buy such large quantities of hair products because he “had a lot of girl friends.”¹

In fact Zazi, a sometime coffee cart operator on Wall Street, was planning to launch what could have been the deadliest terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11 using the seemingly innocuous hair bleach to assemble hydrogen peroxide-based bombs, a signature of al-Qaeda plots in the past several years. During early September 2009, at the Homewood Studio Suites in Aurora Zazi mixed and cooked batches of the noxious chemicals in the kitchenette of his motel room. On the night of September 6, as Zazi labored over the stove he made a number of frantic calls to someone who he asked for advice on how to perfect the bombs. Two days later Zazi was on his way to New York in a rented car. By now President Obama was receiving daily briefings about Zazi, sometimes as many as three or four a day.²

Zazi was spotted in downtown Manhattan on Wall Street on the eighth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks just a few blocks from the gaping hole where the World Trade Center had once stood. By then he was under heavy FBI surveillance and 8 days later, after a series of voluntary discussions with Bureau agents, Zazi was arrested. Likely directed at various targets in and around Manhattan, America’s leading authority on terrorism, Bruce Hoffman, described Zazi’s plan as “Mumbai-on-the-Hudson.”³

Zazi appears to have been the first genuine al-Qaeda recruit discovered living in the United States in years. Zazi had travelled to Pakistan in late August 2008 where by his own admission he was given training on explosives from al-Qaeda members in the Pakistani tribal regions along the Afghan border. On Zazi’s laptop computer the FBI discovered he had stored pages of handwritten notes about the manufacture and initiation of explosives and the components of various detonators and fusing systems, technical know-how he had picked up at one of al-Qaeda’s training facilities in the tribal regions sometime between the late summer of 2008 and January 2009, when he finally returned to the United States. The notations included references to TATP, the explosive used in the London 7/7 bombings.⁴

The Zazi case was a reminder of al-Qaeda’s ability to attract recruits living in America who are “clean skins” without previous criminal records or known terrorist associations and who are intimately familiar with the West. Similarly, Bryant Neal Vinas, a twenty-something Hispanic-American convert to Islam from Queens, New York traveled to Pakistan’s tribal areas in the summer of 2008, where he attended al-Qaeda training courses on explosives and handling weapons such as Rocket Propelled Grenades, lessons that he put to good use when he participated in a rocket attack on an American base in Afghanistan in September 2008.⁵ Vinas was captured in Pakistan the same month and was turned over to the FBI.* He told his interrogators that he had provided al-Qaeda members details about the Long Island Rail

¹ This section draws on my piece in The New Republic, “The Front,” October 19, 2009. <http://www.tnr.com/article/world/the-front>. Also *USA v. Najibullah Zazi*, Eastern District of New York, Indictment. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1063.pdf and Michael Wilson, “From smiling coffee vendor to terror suspect,” New York Times, September 25, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/26/nyregion/26profile.html>.

² Anne Kornblut, “Obama team says Zazi case illustrates balanced approach to terror threat,” Washington Post, October 6, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/05/AR2009100503989.html>.

³ Interview with Bruce Hoffman, Washington, DC, September 2009.

⁴ *USA vs Najibullah Zazi*, Eastern District of New York, 09–CR–663 Memorandum of law in support of the Government’s motion for a permanent order of detention (Via IntelWire).

⁵ *USA vs Bryant Neal Vinas*, Eastern District Court of New York 08–CR–823. <http://intelfiles.egoplex.com/2009-07-22-Bryant-Neal-Vinas-Court-Docs.pdf>. He pled guilty on January 28, 2009 to the charges against him.

* The fact that 7 years after 9/11 a kid from Long Island managed to waltz into an al-Qaeda training camp, a feat that no American spy had done, despite the some \$40 billion that the United States spends a year on its intelligence agencies, says a great deal about how the U.S. intelligence community actually works.

Road commuter train system, which the terror group had some kind of at least notional plan to attack.⁶

Surprisingly, even almost a decade after 9/11 a number of Americans bent on jihad managed to travel to al-Qaeda's headquarters in the tribal regions of Pakistan. In addition to Zazi and Vinas, David Headley, an American of Pakistani descent living in Chicago—who had legally changed his name from Daood Gilani in 2006 to avoid suspicion when he traveled abroad—also allegedly had significant dealings with terrorists based in Pakistan's tribal areas.⁷

Sometime in 2008 Headley hatched a plan to attack the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* which 3 years earlier had published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that were deemed to be offensive by many Muslims. In a message to a Pakistan-based Yahoo group on October 29, 2008 Headley wrote, "Call me old fashioned but I feel disposed towards violence for the offending parties."

The cartoons of the Prophet have been a particular obsession of al-Qaeda. In March 2008 bin Laden publicly denounced the publication of the cartoons as a "catastrophe" for which punishment would soon be meted out. Three months later, an al-Qaeda suicide attacker bombed the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, killing six. For al-Qaeda and allied groups the Danish cartoon controversy has assumed some of the same importance that Salman Rushdie's fictional writings about the Prophet had for Khomeini's Iran two decades earlier.

In January 2009 Headley traveled to Copenhagen, where he reconnoitered the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper on the pretext that he ran an immigration business that was looking to place some advertising in the paper. In coded correspondence with militants in Pakistan Headley referred to his plot to take revenge for the offensive cartoons as the "Mickey Mouse project." On one of his email accounts Headley listed a set of procedures for the project that included, "Route Design," "Counter Surveillance" and "Security."

Following his trip to Denmark Headley met with Ilyas Kashmiri in the Pakistani tribal regions to brief him on his findings. Kashmiri is one of the most prominent militant leaders in Pakistan and runs a terrorist organization, Harakat-ul Jihad Islami, closely tied to al-Qaeda. Headley returned to Chicago in mid-June 2009 and was arrested there 3 months later as he was preparing to leave for Pakistan again. He told investigators that he was planning to kill the *Jyllands-Posten*'s cultural editor Flemming Rose who had first commissioned the cartoons as well as the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard who had drawn the one he found most offensive; the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb concealed in his turban.

Headley said that he also cased a synagogue near the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper headquarters at the direction of a member of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan, the same group that had carried out the Mumbai attacks that killed some 165 people in late November 2008. The Lashkar-e-Taiba militant Headley was in contact with mistakenly believed that the newspaper's cultural editor was Jewish. When he was arrested Headley had a book entitled "How to Pray Like a Jew" in his luggage and a memory stick containing a video of a close-up shot of the entrance to the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in Copenhagen.

Indian authorities are presently examining if Headley also had any role in LeT's 2008 massacre in Mumbai. Reportedly Indian investigators have found that Headley visited a number of the Mumbai locations that were attacked including the Chabad Jewish Center, which was a particular target of LeT's gunmen and would help further explain why Headley had the book about Jewish prayer rituals in his luggage at the time of his arrest.⁸

For many years after 9/11 the United States Government had largely worried about terrorists coming into the country. David Headley is an American exporting the jihad overseas. But he is far from only the only one. According to an as-yet unpublished count by New York University's Center on Law & Security, 25 American citizens or residents have been charged with travelling to an overseas training camp or war zone since 9/11: Two who trained with the Taliban, seven who trained with al-Qaeda; ten who trained with the Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba; four

⁶William K. Rashbaum and Souad Mekhennet, "L.I. man helped al Qaeda, the informed," New York Times, July 22, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/23/nyregion/23terror.html>.

⁷Headley information comes from *United States vs. David C. Headley*, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, Affidavit in Support of Criminal Complaint. <http://media1.suntimes.com/multimedia/headley%20complaint.pdf> 20091027_09_57_00_15. imageContent.

⁸Vishwa Mohan, "Headley, Rana may have been part of 26/11 plot," Times of India, November 18, 2009. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Headley-Rana-may-have-been-part-of-26/11-plot/articleshow/5241252.cms>; Vishwa Mohan, "India to move for extradition of Headley from US," Times of India, November 13, 2009. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-to-move-for-extradition-of-Headley-from-US/articleshow/5224592.cms>.

with the Somali al-Qaeda affiliate, Al Shabab, and three who have trained with some unspecified jihadist outfit in Pakistan. (The actual number of Americans who have travelled overseas for jihad since 9/11 is significantly more than 25 as not everyone who does so ends up being charged or convicted of a crime.)

In September 2009 the Somali Islamist insurgent group Al Shabab formally pledged allegiance to bin Laden following a 2-year period in which it had recruited Somali-Americans and other U.S. Muslims to fight in the war in Somalia. Six months earlier bin Laden had given his own imprimatur to the Somali jihad in an audiotape released titled "Fight On, Champions of Somalia."⁹ Many of Al Shabab's recruits from the States hailed from Minnesota where the largest number of the some 200,000 Somali-Americans in the United States is concentrated.

In 2006 with American encouragement and support Ethiopia, a predominantly Christian country, invaded Somalia, an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, to overthrow the Islamist government there known as the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). While far from ideal the ICU was the first government in two decades to have brought some measure of stability to the failed Somali state but its rumored links to al-Qaeda-like groups had put it in the Bush administration's crosshairs.

Perhaps two dozen Somali-Americans, motivated by a combination of nationalist pride and religious zeal, traveled to Somalia in 2007 and 2008 to fight the Ethiopian occupation. Most of them associated themselves with Al Shabab—"the youth" in Arabic—the insurgent group that would later proclaim itself to be an al-Qaeda affiliate.

Al Shabab managed to plant al-Qaeda-like ideas into the heads of even its American recruits. Shirwa Ahmed grew up in Portland and Minneapolis. After graduating high school in 2003 he worked pushing airline passengers in wheel chairs at Minneapolis Airport and delivered packages for a medical supplies company. FBI director Robert Mueller said that some time during this period Ahmed was "radicalized in his hometown in Minnesota." The exact mechanisms of that radicalization are still murky but in late 2007 Ahmed travelled to Somalia. A year later, on October 29, 2008 Ahmed drove a car loaded with explosives towards a government compound in Puntland, northern Somalia blowing himself up and killing as many as 30. He was the first American suicide attacker anywhere. It's possible that 18-year-old Omar Mohamud of Seattle was the second. On September 17, 2009 two stolen United Nations vehicles loaded with bombs blew up at Mogadishu airport killing more than a dozen peacekeepers of the African Union. The FBI is investigating if Mohamud was one of the bombers.¹⁰

Al Shabab prominently featured its American recruits in its propaganda operations, releasing two videos in 2009 starring Abu Mansoor al Amriki ("the father of Mansoor, the American") who is in fact Omar Hammani, a 25-year-old from Alabama who was raised as a Baptist before converting to Islam while he was at high school. In the video Amriki delivered an eloquent rejoinder to President Obama's speech in Cairo a month earlier in which he had extended an olive branch to the Muslim world. Mansoor addressed himself to Obama in a flat American accent: "How dare you send greetings to the Muslim world while thousands of Muslims are being detained in your facilities. And how dare you send greetings to the Muslim world while you are bombing our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. And how dare you send greetings to Muslims while you are supporting Israel, the most vicious and evil nation of the modern era." Another Al Shabab video from 2009 showed al Amriki preparing an ambush against Ethiopian forces and featured English rap lyrics intercut with scenes of his rag-tag band traipsing through the African bush.¹¹

The chances of getting killed in the Somalia were quite high for the couple of dozen or so Americans who volunteered to fight there; in addition to the two men who conducted suicide operations, six other Somali-Americans aged between 18 and 30 were killed in Somalia between 2007 and 2009 as well as Ruben Shumpert, an African-American convert to Islam from Seattle.¹² Given the high death rate of the Americans fighting in Somalia and also the considerable attention that this group

⁹"Fight on, champions of Somalia," Osama bin Laden tape, translated by NEFA Foundation, March 19, 2009. <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefaubl0309-2.pdf>.

¹⁰Spencer Hsu and Carrie Johnson, "Somali Americans recruited by extremists," Washington Post, March 11, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/10/AR2009031003901.html>; "FBI investigating Seattleite in suicide bombing," Associated Press, September 25, 2009. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33025395/ns/world_news-terrorism/.

¹¹IntelCenter, transcript of al Shabaab video from Abu Mansoor al Amiriki, "A response to Barack Obama's speech in Cairo," July 9, 2009. http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefa_abumansoor0709.pdf.

¹²Spencer Hsu, "Concern grows over recruitment of Somali Americans by Islamists," Washington Post, October 4, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/03/AR2009100302901.html>.

has received from the FBI it is quite unlikely that American veterans of the Somali war pose much of a threat to the United States itself. It is however plausible now that Al Shabab has declared itself to be an al-Qaeda affiliate that the group might recruit U.S. citizens to engage in anti-American operations overseas.

The fact that American citizens had engaged in suicide operations in Somalia raises the possibility that suicide operations could start taking place in the United States itself; to discount this possibility would be to ignore the lessons of the British experience. On April 30, 2003, two Britons of Pakistani descent walked into Mike's Place, a jazz club near the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, the Israeli capital. Once inside one of the men succeeded in detonating a bomb, killing himself and three bystanders, while the other man fled the scene.¹³ Similarly, Birmingham-born Mohammed Bilal blew himself up outside an army barracks in Indian-held Kashmir in December 2000, killing six Indian soldiers and three Kashmiri students, becoming the first British suicide bomber.¹⁴ Despite these suicide attacks the British security services had concluded after 9/11 that suicide bombings would not be much of a concern in the United Kingdom itself. Then came the four suicide attackers in London on July 7, 2005, which ended that complacent attitude.

The case of Major Nidal Malik Hasan, a Palestinian-American medical officer and a rigidly observant Muslim who made no secret of his opposition to America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and went on a shooting spree at the giant army base at Fort Hood, Texas on November 5, 2009 killing 13 and wounding many more, seems to have been an attempted suicide operation in which Hassan planned a jihadist "death-by-cop." In the year before his killing spree Major Hasan had made web postings about suicide operations and the theological justification for the deaths of innocents and was in touch via email with a cleric in Yemen who is an al-Qaeda apologist.¹⁵

Early on the morning of the massacre, the deadliest ever on a U.S. military base, Major Hasan was filmed at a convenience store buying his regular snack dressed in white flowing robes. The color white is often associated with martyrdom in Islam, as the dead are wrapped in white winding sheets.¹⁶

In the previous days Major Hasan had given away many of his possessions to his neighbors in the decrepit apartment block they shared, saying that he was leaving for an overseas deployment. Neighbor Lenna Brown recalled, "I asked him where are you going, and he said Afghanistan." Asked how he felt about that, Major Hasan paused before answering: "I am going to do God's work." He gave Brown a Koran before he left for what he believed to be his last day on earth.¹⁷

As he opened fire in a room full of fellow soldiers who were filling out paperwork for their deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, Hasan shouted at the top of his lungs Allah Akbar! God is Great!, the battle cry of Muslim warriors down the centuries.¹⁸

Major Hasan is a social misfit who never married, largely avoided women (except, apparently, strippers)¹⁹ and had few friends, while the psychiatric counseling he gave to wounded veterans when he worked at Walter Reed Medical Army Center in Washington, DC might have contributed to a sense of impending doom about his own deployment to Afghanistan. But while Hasan was undoubtedly something of an oddball, in what he assumed to be his final days he seems to have conceived of himself as a holy warrior intent on martyrdom. Hasan survived being shot by a police officer and was put in intensive care in a hospital in San Antonio, Texas. After he woke up he found himself not in Paradise but paralyzed from the waist down and

¹³ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Details of April 30, 2003 Tel Aviv suicide bombing, dated June 3, 2003. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2003/Details+of+April+30+2003+Tel+Aviv+suicide+bombing.htm>.

¹⁴ Emma Brockes, "British man named as bomber who killed 10," The Guardian, December 28, 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/dec/28/india.kashmir>.

¹⁵ Sudarsan Raghavan, "Cleric says he was confidant to Hasan," Washington Post, November 16, 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/15/AR2009111503160_pf.html.

¹⁶ Maria Newman and Michael Brick, "Neighbor says Hasab gave belongings away before attack," New York Times, November 7, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/07/us/07suspect.html>; "the color white" from David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 117.

¹⁷ Scott Shane and James Dao, "Investigators study tangle of clues on Fort Hood suspect," New York Times, November 14, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/us/15hasan.html>.

¹⁸ Sanjay Gupta on Anderson Cooper 360, interview with Logan Burnette, November 11, 2009. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/091111/acd.01.html>.

¹⁹ Joseph Rhee, "Accused Fort Hood shooter was a regular at shooting range, strip club," ABC News, November 16, 2009. <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/accused-fort-hood-shooter-nidal-hasan-visited-strip/story?id=9090116>.

being interrogated by investigators to whom he has so far divulged nothing about the motivations for his rampage.

For Americans fired up by jihadist ideology, U.S. soldiers fighting two wars in Muslim countries were particularly inviting targets. Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, an African-American convert to Islam, shot up a U.S. military recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas a few months before Hasan's murderous spree, killing an American soldier and wounding another. Despite the fact that the FBI had had him under surveillance following a mysterious trip that he had recently taken to Yemen, Muhammad was able to acquire guns and attack the recruiting station in broad daylight. When Muhammad was arrested in his vehicle police found a rifle with a laser sight, a revolver, ammunition, and the makings of Molotov cocktails.²⁰ (The middle name that Muhammad assumed after his conversion to Islam, Mujahid or "holy warrior," should have been a red flag, as this is a far from a common name among Muslims.)

A group of some half dozen American citizens and residents of the small town of Willow Creek, North Carolina led by a charismatic convert to Islam, Daniel Boyd, who had fought in the jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets, are also alleged to have had some kind of plan to attack American soldiers. Starting in 2008 Boyd purchased eight rifles and a revolver and members of his group did paramilitary training on two occasions in the summer of 2009. According to Federal prosecutors, members of Boyd's cell conceived of themselves as potential participants in overseas jihads from Israel to Pakistan. And Boyd obtained maps of Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, which he cased for a possible attack on June 12, 2009. He also allegedly possessed armor-piercing ammunition saying it was "to attack Americans" and said that one of his weapons would be used "for the base," an apparent reference to the Quantico facility.²¹

Similarly, in 2007 a group of observant Muslims, a mix of Albanians, a Turk and a Palestinian, living in southern New Jersey angered by the Iraq War told a Government informant they had a plan to kill soldiers stationed at the Ft. Dix Army Base. One of the group made an amateur mistake when he went to a Circuit City store and asked for a video to be transferred to DVD. On the DVD a number of young men were shown shooting assault weapons and shouting Allah Akbar! during a January 2006 training session.²² An alarmed clerk at the Circuit City store alerted his superiors and quickly the FBI became involved in the case and an informant was inserted inside the group.

One of the plotters, Serdar Tatar, knew the base well because he made deliveries there from his family's pizza parlor, Super Mario's Pizza. The Fort Dix plotters assembled a number of rifles and pistols and regularly conducted firearms training in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania and also went on paintball trips together, a common form of bonding for jihadist militants. The plotters also looked into purchasing an array of automatic weapons.²³ And on August 11 2006 the ringleader, Mohamad Shnewer, conducted surveillance of the Ft. Dix base telling the Government informant: "This is exactly what we are looking for. You hit four, five, six Humvees and light the whole place [up] and retreat completely without any losses."²⁴

Another group that planned to attack U.S. military installations was led by Kevin Lamar James, an African-American convert to Islam who formed a group dedicated to holy war while he was jailed in California's Folsom prison during the late 1990s. James, who viewed his outfit as "al-Qaeda in California," cooked up a plan to recruit five people, in particular those without criminal records, to help him with his plans. One of his recruits had a job at Los Angeles Airport (LAX), which James thought could be useful. In a list he made of potential targets James listed LAX, the Israeli

²⁰ District Court of Little Rock, Arkansas, County of Pulaski, Affidavit for Search and Seizure Warrant. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/988.pdf.

²¹ USA vs Daniel Patrick Boyd et al Indictment in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, filed 7/22/09 http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1029.pdf; and the superseding indictment in the same case dated September 24, 2009. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1075.pdf.

²² Much of this information comes from the NEFA Foundation report, "Fort Dix Plot," January 2008. <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/fortdixplot.pdf>.

²³ USA vs Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, Dritan Duka, Elvir Duka, Shain Duka, Sedrdar Tatar U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, Criminal No 07-459. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/564.pdf.

²⁴ USA vs Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer Criminal Complaint U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey filed May 7, 2007, page 11.

consulate in Los Angeles, a U.S. Army base in Manhattan Beach and “Army recruiting centers throughout the country.”²⁵

James’ crew planned to attack a U.S. military recruiting station in Los Angeles on the fourth anniversary of 9/11 as well as a synagogue a month later during Yom Kippur, the most solemn of Jewish holidays. They financed their activities by sticking up gas stations and their plans only came to light during the course of a routine investigation of a gas station robbery by police in Torrance, California who found documents that laid out their plans for jihadist mayhem.

The constellation of terrorism cases that surfaced during the second Bush term and during Obama’s first year in office suggests that a small minority of Americans Muslims are not immune to the al-Qaeda ideological virus. And quite a number of those terrorism cases were more operational than aspirational, unlike many of the domestic terror cases that had preceded them following 9/11. The jihadists in these cases were not just talking about violent acts to a government informant but had actually traveled to an al-Qaeda training camp; had fought in an overseas jihad; had purchased guns or explosives; were casing targets, and in a couple of the cases, had actually killed Americans.

The cases in the past few years have also presented an interesting mix of purely “homegrown” militants who are essentially lone wolves like Major Hasan and Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, who nonetheless both were able to pull off deadly attacks against U.S. military targets; “self-starting” radicals with no connections to al-Qaeda but inspired by its ideas, like the Torrance cell who posed a serious threat to Jewish and military targets in the United States and whose plans for mass mayhem were, crucially, not driven forward by an informant; homegrown militants opting to fight in an overseas jihad with an al-Qaeda affiliate as the Somali-Americans recruits to Al Shabab have done; militants like David Headley who is alleged to have played an important operational role for the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is acting today with an increasingly al-Qaeda-like agenda, and finally those like Zazi and Vinas who managed to plug directly into al-Qaeda central.

According to the forthcoming study by New York University’s Center on Law & Security since 9/11 the Government has charged or convicted at least 20 Americans and foreigners who have direct connections to al-Qaeda and were conspiring with the group to carry out some type of attack; a further nine have attended one of al-Qaeda’s training camps but did not have an operational terrorist plan, and a further two dozen “homegrown” militants aspired to help al-Qaeda in some other way but were either ensnared by a Government informant or simply failed to connect with the group because of their own incompetence.

This raises the question of what kind of exact threat to the homeland is posed by this cohort of militants who run the gamut from incompetent “homegrown” to American citizens who have been trained by al-Qaeda itself?

If the Government’s allegations are correct and Zazi had managed to carry out his plans, he could have killed scores of Americans as his plan looks similar to that of the al-Qaeda-directed bombers in London who killed 52 commuters on July 7, 2005 with the same kind of hydrogen peroxide-based bombs that Zazi was assembling in his Denver motel room. But the Zazi case also represents the outer limit of al-Qaeda’s capabilities in the United States today.

Some have suggested that the reason that al-Qaeda has not attacked the United States again is because the group is waiting to match or top the 9/11 attacks. Michael Scheuer, the former head of CIA’s bin Laden unit, has said that, “They’re not interested in an attack that is the same size as the last one.”²⁶ This proposition cannot be readily tested, as the absence of a 9/11-scale attack on the United States is, in this view, supposedly just more evidence for the assertion that al-Qaeda is planning something on the scale of 9/11 or larger. In fact, the Zazi case forcefully demonstrates that al-Qaeda is not waiting to launch “the big one” but is content to get any kind of terrorist operation going in the United States, even a relatively small-bore attack.

Indeed, it is my assessment that the al-Qaeda organization today no longer poses a direct National security threat to the United States itself, but rather poses a second-order threat in which the worst case scenario would be an al-Qaeda-trained or -inspired terrorist managing to pull off an attack on the scale of something in between the 1993 Trade Center attack, which killed six, and the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995, which killed 168. While this, of course, would be tragic, it would not

²⁵ *USA vs Kevin James et al* U.S. District Court for the Central District of California Case No. CR 05-214-CJC and exhibits. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1089.pdf.

²⁶ Joel Roberts, CBS News, June 18, 2006. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/06/18/terror/main1726666.shtml>.

constitute a mass casualty attack sufficiently large in scale to reorient American national security policy completely as the 9/11 attacks did.

An important element in al-Qaeda's much degraded capability to launch a mass casualty attack on the American homeland is the pressure it is under in Pakistan; including ramped-up U.S. drone attacks in the Pakistani tribal regions where the group is headquartered; far better intelligence on the militants based in those tribal areas, and increasingly negative Pakistani public and governmental attitudes towards militant jihadist groups based in Pakistan.

There are, however, three important caveats on the success of the drone operations: First, the Afghan-American Najibullah Zazi was still able to receive training on explosives from al-Qaeda in the tribal regions of Pakistan during the fall of 2009 after the drone program had been dramatically ramped up there. Second, militant organizations like al-Qaeda are not like an organized crime family, which can be put out of business if most or all of the members of the family are captured or killed. Al-Qaeda has sustained and can continue to sustain enormous blows that would put other organizations out of business because the members of the group firmly believe that they are doing God's work and tactical setbacks do not matter in the short run. Third, it is highly unlikely that the drone program will be expanded outside of the tribal regions into other areas of Pakistan because of intense Pakistani opposition to such a move. Understanding that fact, some militants have undoubtedly moved into safer parts of Pakistan.

The threat posed by al-Qaeda to American interests and allies overseas continues to be somewhat high. Despite all the pressure placed on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 9/11, training has continued in Pakistan's tribal areas and is the common link between the terrorist group's "successes" and its near-misses since then; for instance, the deadliest terrorist attack in British history—the four suicide bombings on London's transportation system on July 7, 2005—was directed by al-Qaeda from the tribal regions.

The four bombs that detonated in London on what became known as 7/7 were all hydrogen peroxide-based devices. This has become something of a signature of plots that have a connection to Pakistani training camps. Two weeks after the 7/7 attacks on July 21, 2005 there was a second wave of hydrogen peroxide-based bombs set off in London, this one organized by a cell of Somali and Eritrean men who were first-generation immigrants to the United Kingdom. Luckily the bombs were ineffective.

Hydrogen peroxide-based bombs would again be the signature of a cell of British Pakistanis who plotted to bring down seven passenger jets flying to the United States and Canada from the United Kingdom during the summer of 2006. The plotters distilled hydrogen peroxide to manufacture liquid explosives, which they assembled in an apartment-turned-bomb factory in East London. The case resulted in the immediate ban of all carry-on liquids and gels, and rules were later put in place to limit the amounts of these items that travelers could bring on planes.

The "planes plot" conspirators were arrested in August 2006 and in subsequent congressional testimony Lieutenant General Michael Maples, the head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, said the plot was "directed by al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan."²⁷

During the trial of the eight men accused in the "planes plot" the prosecution argued that some 1,500 passengers would have died if all seven planes had been brought down. The plot, which was entering its final stages in the summer of 2006, seemed designed to "celebrate" the upcoming fifth anniversary of 9/11 by once again targeting commercial aviation, another particular obsession of al-Qaeda. Most of the victims of the attacks would have been Americans, Britons, and Canadians.

The seriousness of the intent of the plotters can be seen in the fact that six of them made "martyrdom" videotapes recovered by British investigators. At their trial prosecutors played the video made by the ringleader, 25-year-old Abdullah Ahmed Ali. Against a backdrop of a black flag adorned with flowing Arabic script and dressed in a Palestinian-style black-and-white checkered head scarf, Ali lectured into the camera, "Sheikh Osama warned you many times to leave our lands or you will be destroyed. Now the time has come for you to be destroyed."²⁸

In September Ali and two of his co-conspirators were found guilty of planning to blow up the transatlantic airliners. Some of the key evidence against them was

²⁷Michael Maples, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," Statement for the record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, January 11, 2007. <http://www.dia.mil/publicaffairs/Testimonies/statement26.html>.

²⁸Cahal Milmo, "You will be destroyed: bombers convicted of Heathrow plot," *The Independent*, September 9, 2008. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/you-will-be-destroyed-bombers-convicted-of-heathrow-plot-923467.html>.

emails they had exchanged with their handler in Pakistan Rashid Rauf, a British citizen who has worked closely with al-Qaeda, who ordered them “to get a move on” with their operation in an email he sent them on July 25, 2006.²⁹ Those emails were intercepted by American spy agencies which led to the arrests of Ali and his cell.

Pakistan’s tribal regions have continued to attract Westerners intent on inflicting jihadist mayhem against American targets, like the two Germans and a Turk residing in Germany who were planning to bomb the massive U.S. Ramstein airbase there in 2007. Before their arrests, the men had obtained 1,600 pounds of industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, enough to make a number of large bombs.

Today the al-Qaeda the organization continues to pose a substantial threat to U.S. interests overseas and could still pull off an attack that would kill hundreds of Americans as was the plan during the “planes plot” of 2006. No Western country is more threatened by al-Qaeda than the United Kingdom, although a spate of arrests and successful prosecutions over the past 4 years have degraded the terrorist’s group’s capability in the United Kingdom.

Despite the relatively serious terror cases emerging in the United States in 2008 and 2009 America did not have a jihadist terrorism problem anywhere on the scale of Britain where an al-Qaeda-directed cell had launched the deadliest terrorist attack in British history in 2005, and where 4 years later British intelligence had identified as many as 2,000 citizens or residents who posed a “serious” threat to security, many of whom were linked to al-Qaeda, in a country with only a fifth of the population of the United States.³⁰

Why is the threat from al-Qaeda lower in the United States than it is in the United Kingdom? There is little doubt that some of the measures the Bush administration and Congress took after 9/11 made Americans safer. First, the Patriot Act accomplished something quite important, which was to break down the legal “wall” that had been blocking the flow of information between the CIA and the FBI. Second, the creation of the National Counter Terrorism Center led to various Government agencies sharing data and analyzing it under one roof. (Although it should be noted that the center was the brainchild of the 9/11 Commission—whose establishment the Bush administration fought tooth-and-nail for more than a year.) Third, it became much harder for terrorists to get into the country thanks to no-fly lists. Before 9/11 the total number of suspected terrorists banned from air travel totaled just 16 names; while 6 years later there were at least 44,000.³¹

The most dramatic instance of how the no-fly list prevented potential terrorists from arriving in the United States was the case of Raed al Banna—a 32-year-old Jordanian English-speaking lawyer who was denied entry at Chicago’s O’Hare airport on 14 June 2003 because border officials detected “multiple terrorist risk factors.” A year and half later al Banna conducted a suicide bombing in Hilla, Iraq on 28 February 2005 that killed 132 people—his fingerprints were found on the severed hand chained to the steering wheel of his bomb-filled truck.³²

Finally, cooperation between U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies has been generally strong after September 11. For instance, al-Qaeda’s 2006 plot to bring down the seven American and Canadian airliners was disrupted by the joint work of U.S., British, and Pakistani intelligence services.

That said, a key reason the United States escaped a serious terrorist attack has little to do with either the Bush or Obama administrations. In sharp contrast to Muslim populations in European countries like Britain—where al-Qaeda has found recruits for multiple serious terrorist plots—the American Muslim community has largely rejected the ideological virus of militant Islam. The “American Dream” has generally worked well for Muslims in the United States, who are both better-educated and wealthier than the average American. More than a third of Muslim Amer-

²⁹ Henry Chu and Sebastian Rotella, “Three Britons convicted of plot to blow up planes,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2009. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-ig-britain-verdict8-2009sep08,0,7134412,full.story>.

³⁰ Michael Evans, “MI5’s spymaster Jonathan Evans comes out of the shadows,” *Times of London*, January 7, 2009. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article5462528.ece>.

³¹ CBS 60 Minutes, October 8, 2006. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/10/05/60minutes/main2066624.shtml>.

³² Scott Shane and Lowell Bergman, “Adding up the ounces of prevention,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/weekinreview/10shane.html>; Scott Macleod, “A jihadist’s tale,” *Time*, March 28, 2005. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1042473,00.html>; Charlotte Buchen, “The man turned away,” *PBS Frontline*, “The Enemy Within,” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/enemywithin/reality/al-banna.html>.

icans have a graduate degree or better, compared to less than 10% of the population as a whole.³³

For European Muslims there is no analogous “British Dream,” “French Dream,” or, needless to say, “EU Dream.” None of this is to say that the limited job opportunities and segregation that are the lot of many European Muslims are the causes of terrorism in Europe—only that such conditions may create favorable circumstances in which al-Qaeda can recruit and feed into bin Laden’s master narrative that the infidel West is at war with Muslims in some shape or form all around the world. And, in the absence of those conditions militant Islam has never gained much of an American foothold—largely sparing the United States from the scourge of homegrown terrorism. This is fundamentally a testament to American pluralism, not any action of the American Government.

An important caveat: Some of the men drawn to jihad in America in recent years looked much like their largely disadvantaged and poorly integrated European Muslim counterparts. The Afghan-American al-Qaeda recruit, Najibullah Zazi, a high school dropout, earned his living as an airport shuttle bus driver; the Somali-American community in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis where some of the young men who volunteered to fight in Somalia had lived, is largely ghettoized. Family incomes there average less than \$15,000 a year and the unemployment rate is 17%.³⁴ Bryant Neal Vinas, the kid from Long Island who volunteered for a suicide mission with al-Qaeda, skipped college, washed out of the U.S. Army after 3 weeks and later became a truck driver, a job he quit for good in 2007.³⁵ The five men in the Fort Dix cell were all illegal immigrants who supported themselves with construction or delivery jobs.

Decades ago the anger and disappointments of some of these men might have been funneled into revolutionary anti-American movements like the Weather Underground or Black Panthers. Today, militant jihadism provides a similar outlet for the rage of young men with its false promises of a total explication of the world, which is grafted on to a profound hatred for the West, in particular, the United States.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.

Dr. Pillar.

**STATEMENT OF PAUL R. PILLAR, PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR
OF GRADUATE STUDIES, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM,
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**

Mr. PILLAR. Thank you, Madame Chair, and Mr. King and Members of the committee.

Although the title of this hearing refers explicitly to al-Qaeda, I take the committee’s interest to be terrorist threats in general to the U.S. homeland, which are not solely a matter of al-Qaeda or any other single group. By al-Qaeda, I am talking about al-Qaeda Central.

Although there is a widespread tendency to gauge the seriousness of any incident to the extent that we can draw links to someone or something connected to al-Qaeda, the whole notion of links needs to be handled more carefully than it customarily is. Links can and do mean anything from command and control on the one extreme, to the most casual or feckless contacts on the other. They do not themselves indicate where the initiative came from.

A key question to consider is why and how individuals become radicalized to the extent that they commit or attempt or even contemplate politically motivated violence. A terrorist group or leader can provide an ideological framework or inspiration, but individual,

³³ Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack* (Macmillan, 2006). P. 119.

³⁴ Abdurahman Mukhtar, testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, March 11, 2009. http://hsgac.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=c762508c-3694-4894-808a-229afb1d8d9.

³⁵ TIME magazine profile by Claire Suddath, July 24, 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1912512,00.html> and Michael Powell, “U.S. recruit reveals how Qaeda trains foreigners,” New York Times, July 23, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/24/nyregion/24terror.html>.

pre-existing anger or discontent that is sufficiently strong for the blandishments of a terrorist group to have any appeal in the first place, is a necessary ingredient.

That predisposition, in turn, can have any or all of several sources—and we have seen some of this in the recent incidents—ranging from personal frustrations to anger over controversial public policies. To the extent that we want to understand U.S. citizens or U.S. persons turning to terrorism against the United States, those are the sources to which we have to look.

I would summarize the most important patterns in international terrorism with particular reference to threats to the U.S. homeland in the 8 years since 9/11 with two observations. Madame Chair, you basically touched on this yourself in your opening comments.

First, the group that accomplished 9/11, al-Qaeda Central, although still a threat, is less capable of pulling off something of that magnitude than it was in 2001. For that, we have in large part to thank many of the variety of measures that the American people's outrage over 9/11 made possible, politically possible, in a way that was not possible before that event. That includes enhanced defensive security measures here at home, as well as a variety of offensive measures overseas.

The other observation is that the broader, violent jihadist movement—of which al-Qaeda Central is a part—is probably at least as large and widespread as it was 8 years ago. Here again, some of our own actions have been major contributors, especially, I must add, the war in Iraq.

The overall result of these trends is a more diffuse threat, in which the initiative for violence and attacks comes from more different places than it did a few years ago.

It is against this backdrop that we have to view the specter of people here in the United States—including, possibly, U.S. citizens—perpetrating terrorist attacks within the United States. Homegrown perpetrators have certain advantages over outsiders, after all. They do not have to cross the borders, where we have enhanced our security. They do not stand out. In short, they are harder to detect.

This does make them more attractive, potential recruits for foreign terrorist groups. But for the same reason, any U.S. persons who do turn to terrorism would present a significant counterterrorism challenge, whether or not they are affiliated with a foreign group.

Peter Bergen has already addressed quite well the comparison between the United States and Europe as far as the American Muslim community is concerned. I agree with everything he said.

I would just say that, incidents to date here in our country do not add up to a significant homegrown Islamist terrorist problem in the United States, at least not yet. But episodes like the shooting at Fort Hood suggest the possibility of more, and they suggest the sorts of reasons and motivations that could make for more.

Finally, I was asked, Madame Chair, to comment on what effect U.S. policies and warfighting have on threats to the United States. Here is basically two points, as well.

Some uses of force overseas—including, for example, the firing of missiles from unmanned aircraft in Pakistan—have contributed to

the eroding of the organizational capabilities of foreign terrorist groups, and, specifically, al-Qaeda.

On the other hand, the use of military force can and does exacerbate the terrorist threat by stoking anger against the United States and U.S. policies, largely because of inevitable collateral damage.

We have seen this take place in Pakistan. We have seen it take place in Afghanistan. The same sort of sentiments can arise here in the United States.

However one chooses to characterize or label what Nidal Hasan did at Fort Hood, his reported sentiments about America's current overseas wars and how they figure into the action he took, illustrate a phenomenon that we should not be surprised to see more of.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.
[The statement of Mr. Pillar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL R. PILLAR

19 NOVEMBER 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the subcommittee regarding the nature and evolution of the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland. The title of the hearing refers to a single terrorist group, al-Qaeda, but it is important to place the threat from that group within a larger context that includes other radical Islamist cells and individuals—some that may have already gotten into terrorism, and some that may do so in the future—that also constitute portions of that threat. Many of those cells and individuals may be motivated by grievances and sentiments that al-Qaeda has sought to exploit. Some may even be sympathetic to some of al-Qaeda's aims. But this does not necessarily mean that their activity has been instigated, organized, or directed by al-Qaeda.

There is a widespread tendency to gauge the seriousness with which one ought to view any instance of political violence or attempted violence according to whether or not it is "linked" to al-Qaeda, or linked to something or someplace that is in turn linked to al-Qaeda. The existence of such links is taken as an indicator that we ought to be concerned; their absence is taken as reason not to worry, or to worry less. This manner of interpreting incidents or plots is a misleading way of assessing terrorist threats to the U.S. homeland.

The whole notion of "links" needs to be used with far more care and caution than it customarily is. Links can—and do—mean anything from operational control to the most innocuous and casual contacts that tell us nothing about the impetus for terrorism. Even if a link is firmly established and goes beyond casual contact, it does not by itself tell us from which end of the link the initiative to establish it came.

It is appropriate that the committee should reexamine the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland in light of several incidents or alleged plots that have been in the news in recent months. Such episodes do raise important issues about the nature of that threat. As a private citizen, I cannot add to the factual knowledge about any incident beyond what you already have read in the newspapers. In any event, caution is required in drawing conclusions about larger patterns from individual incidents. We tend to take one incident as a pattern and two as a trend, even if it is not.

ROOTS OF RADICALIZATION

With those caveats, one key question to consider is why and how individuals become radicalized to the extent that they commit or attempt, or even contemplate, terrorist violence. A terrorist group or leader may provide an ideology that rationalizes extreme acts and in some cases an organizational structure that facilitates carrying them out. A necessary ingredient, however, is individual pre-existing anger or discontent that is sufficiently strong for the blandishments of a terrorist group to have any appeal in the first place. That predisposition in turn may have any or all of several sources, ranging from frustrating personal circumstances to public policies that incur more widespread ire and controversy. To the extent that people in the United States, including U.S. citizens, are turning onto the malevolent path of terrorism against the United States itself, such sources provide the most important part of the explanation for why they doing so. Even the most adept and ag-

gressively proselytizing foreign terrorist group could not make gains without raw material in the form of disaffected and alienated individuals.

And even when a foreign terrorist group, be it al-Qaeda or any other, does manage to get involved, the initiative is as likely as not to come from the individual. Najibullah Zasi—although there is much about his case that is not publicly known and more that we probably will find out in the future—appears to have become radicalized during his days selling coffee and pastries from a cart in lower Manhattan. This was before, not after, he reportedly spent time at a training camp in Pakistan. And of course, one needs a prior motive to do something like trekking to the other side of the globe to attend such a camp.

To the extent that a foreign group such as al-Qaeda is having any influence on disaffected Americans, it is less through face-to-face direction or instruction and more through an extreme ideology. Al-Qaeda and in particular the leadership of al-Qaeda, in the persons of bin Ladin and Zawahiri, is today less relevant to the security of the U.S. homeland as a source of operational instigation, direction, and control than as a source of malevolent ideas.

MAJOR TRENDS

The most important patterns in international terrorism, with particular reference to threats to the U.S. homeland, in the 8 years since 9/11 can be summarized in two trends pointing in different directions. The first is that the group that accomplished 9/11, al-Qaeda, is—although still a threat—less capable of pulling off something of that magnitude than it was in 2001. This is possible in large part because of a variety of measures that the outrage of the American public made politically possible in a way that was not possible before 9/11. These include enhanced defensive security measures at home as well as expanded offensive efforts overseas that have eroded al-Qaeda's organizational infrastructure.

The other major pattern or trend is that the broader violent jihadist movement of which al-Qaeda is a part is probably at least as large and strong as it was 8 years ago. Here again, some of our own actions have been major contributors. The war in Iraq was one such action. It provided a jihadists' training ground and networking opportunity similar to what the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan had provided two decades earlier. And in the words of the U.S. intelligence community, the war in Iraq became a "cause celebre" for radical Islamists.

The overall result of these two trends is a terrorist threat that is more diffuse than it was several years ago. The centers of action and initiative for possible attacks, including against the U.S. homeland, are more numerous than they were several years ago.

HOME-GROWN TERRORISM

Against this backdrop is the specter—raised anew by some of the recent incidents—of people in the United States, including U.S. citizens, in effect adopting some variant of radical Islamism and perpetrating terrorist attacks within the United States. The possibility is worthy of attention, if for no other reason because of the operational advantages and opportunities this represents for terrorists. Home-grown perpetrators have significant advantages over foreign operatives who, like the 9/11 terrorists, come into the country from abroad to commit their deed. The natives do not have to deal with enhanced border control procedures. They do not stand out. They are, in short, harder to detect. And they are more familiar with the territory and with their targets.

These operational advantages would make U.S. citizens or residents attractive recruiting targets for foreign terrorist groups hoping to conduct operations within the United States. But for the same operational reasons, any U.S. persons who do become terrorists would present a significant counterterrorist challenge even without having any affiliation with al-Qaeda or some other foreign group.

A common and reassuring observation among those who have studied the problem of home-grown terrorism is that the United States is less vulnerable than most European countries to terrorism and other political violence committed by their own Muslim populations. The reason is that American Muslims are better integrated and less ghettoized than their counterparts in Europe. This is true, but ghettos are not a necessity, and community integration is not a foolproof safeguard, when it comes to individuals or small groups committing what still can be significant acts of violence.

Incidents to date cannot be described as yet adding up to a significant home-grown Islamist terrorist problem in the United States. But episodes like the shooting at Fort Hood suggest the possibility of more, and the sort of reasons and motiva-

tions that could make for more. And this does not depend on any recruiting successes or training activity by the likes of al-Qaeda.

METHODS OF ATTACK

The security measures implemented since 9/11 increase the importance of lone individuals or very small groups that may emerge within the United States, relative to the importance of an established foreign terrorist organization such as al-Qaeda. Those security measures have made it harder to conduct a terrorist spectacular like 9/11, where the resources, sophistication, and experience of such an organization would be most relevant. The hardening of the civil aviation system in the United States has made it much more difficult to conduct an attack a lot like 9/11. This leaves the many more mundane but less rectifiable vulnerabilities in American society. A disturbing and unavoidable fact is that just about anyone can stage a shoot-'em-up in any of countless public places in the United States. This is low-tech and unsophisticated, but it can cause enough carnage to make a significant impact on the American consciousness. The likely shape of future terrorist methods of attack in the United States is best represented by what happened at Fort Hood, or by the "D.C. sniper" episode that traumatized the National capital area a few years ago, an episode about which we were reminded when the principal perpetrator was executed just last week.

EFFECTS OF MILITARY OPERATIONS OVERSEAS

All of this has implications for the effect, if any, of our own counterterrorist and military operations overseas on the level of threat to the U.S. homeland. Some such operations, including the firing of missiles from unmanned aircraft at individual targets in northwest Pakistan and elsewhere, have contributed to the eroding of the organizational capabilities of foreign terrorist groups and specifically al-Qaeda. To the extent those capabilities are relevant to possible attacks on the U.S. homeland—and for the reasons I mentioned, that relevance is limited—they may have some positive effect on homeland security. Kinetic operations do not diminish the ideological and inspirational role that now is probably the more important contribution that al-Qaeda makes to threats to American security.

The larger use of U.S. military force now under discussion is, of course, the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Pursuing and expanding that counterinsurgency would not reduce the threat of terrorist attack to the U.S. homeland. The people we are fighting—Afghans loosely grouped under the label "Taliban"—have no interest in the United States except insofar as we are in Afghanistan and frustrating their objectives there. Their sometime allies in al-Qaeda do not require a piece of physical territory to conceive, plan, prepare, and conduct terrorist operations against western interests. To the extent the group finds a physical haven useful, even a successful counterinsurgency in line with General McChrystal's strategy would still leave such havens available to the group in Pakistan, in the unsecured portions of Afghanistan, or elsewhere.

Meanwhile the use of military force can exacerbate the terrorist threat by stoking anger against the United States and U.S. policies, largely because of the inevitable collateral damage. The anger increases the likelihood of people sympathizing with or supporting anti-U.S. terrorism, and in some cases joining or initiating such terrorism themselves. We already have seen such angry anti-Americanism in response to some of the missile strikes, and on a larger scale in response to military operations on the ground in Afghanistan, where previously dominant pro-American opinion has in large part dissipated. An expansion of the counterinsurgency would add resentment against the United States as a perceived occupying power to the anger over collateral damage.

We also have already seen such sentiments translate into anti-U.S. violence in Afghanistan in the form of many Afghans who have no liking for Taliban ideology or rule but have taken up arms to oppose American forces. Similar sentiments can have similar effects far from the field of battle, including in the U.S. homeland. Of all the elements of terrorism and counterterrorism that move easily across continents and oceans in a globalized world, emotion-stoking news about controversial policies and events is one of the easiest to move. However one chooses to characterize what Nidal Hasan did at Fort Hood, his reported sentiments about America's current overseas wars and how these sentiments figured into the action he took illustrate a phenomenon that we should not be surprised to see more of, albeit in different forms.

The indirect effects of anger and resentment are inherently more difficult to gauge or even to perceive than the direct effects of military action in seizing or securing territory or in killing individual operatives. But this does not mean they are less

important in affecting terrorist threats. They are the main reason that in my judgment, expansion and extension of the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan is more likely to increase than to decrease the probability that Americans inside the United States will fall victim to terrorism in the years ahead.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.
Dr. Crenshaw.

STATEMENT OF MARTHA CRENSHAW, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND COOPERATION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Ms. CRENSHAW. Thank you. Thank you Chair Harman, Representative King and Members of the subcommittee.

I do not disagree profoundly with what my colleagues have said so far. I think that al-Qaeda, although seriously weakened in the past 8 years, poses a serious threat, and that our policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan are going to impact the future of that threat in ways that we do not really know, but that we need to watch very carefully.

I base my judgment on two things. One is the organizational capacity of al-Qaeda, and the other is their ideological intentions and their belief system. It is a very simple dichotomy, but still, I think, quite real.

Now, in terms of organization, again, I do not disagree with my colleagues, but I will point to what I regard as the all-important middle level of organization in al-Qaeda. Sometimes we treat it as though it were al-Qaeda Central at the top, which may indeed be growing in influence again, and then rank-and-file recruits or volunteers at the bottom, when I see an intermediate level as critically important.

That intermediate level, to my mind, has two components. One is radical clerics, who, in the cases in Britain, in Denmark, and the United States now, have encouraged, if not recruited, individuals who have a predisposition to be recruited, which is all too important.

Second, we do not want to neglect the role of organizations in conflict zones, as in Yemen, Somalia—in Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, who are real, functioning, structured organizations to which these individuals can make contact, as well.

So, it is not just al-Qaeda Central in terms of a leadership and a structured organization, and arenas for training camps. So, the training camps do not have to be in Afghanistan-Pakistan. If they are elsewhere, they will probably be even harder for us to locate, if they are in Yemen or in Somalia.

In terms of the intention behind terrorism, as the Chair noted, it is a very important thing to al-Qaeda to be able to recruit in the West. It is a legitimizing device. It may not necessarily matter to them whether they are actually directing what people are doing, or whether they are simply inspiring them to be imitators of what they have already seen.

If there are attacks within the West, al-Qaeda at some level will take credit for it. So, they will say there is a connection, even if we do not think—or our intelligence agencies do not think—that there was a connection.

If you look at the writings of Abu Musab al-Suri, who was an important ideologue in al-Qaeda, who was captured by our forces in 2005, he lays out a very clear plan for recruiting in the West and points out that, under Western pressure, the only sensible way to keep the al-Qaeda movement going is to encourage small cells to be created in the West.

Now, in looking at this kind of relationship, one thing I want to stress, I think, is that, in my view al-Qaeda is not what we would call a social movement. It is often referred to as a movement, and in many ways it is. But to me, just calling it a movement implies that it has a lot of grassroots support.

I regard it as more of a transnational secret society composed of clandestine cells around the world. It has very little above-ground support. It has some, but it is very small. So, I think we need to keep in mind that the number of people who are attracted to al-Qaeda or who belong to its organized branches, wherever they are, is actually a very, very small number of people.

It may be growing. It is very, very hard for us to tell, because, as I put in my testimony, we cannot count the number of people at recruiting stations. We do not know how many people might be susceptible to recruitment, how many people are out there. But it is important to remember that it is a very small number of people.

In terms of the intention behind the use of violence against the West, I will just point to one encouraging dimension, although I have to say that I am not completely encouraged, and that is divisions within the ranks of al-Qaeda ideologues.

During the past 8 years, there have been more figures who were affiliated with al-Qaeda breaking ranks and saying they disapprove, either of attacks on civilians or attacks on Muslim civilians, with that qualification.

I myself am not sure how much influence these clerics have. In most cases they are clerics or leaders. I am not sure how many people find them credible. But I think we can regard that as sort of a source of very cautious optimism that there may be some splits and fissures within the overall movement that may give us an opportunity for making inroads into the movement and into halting this process of recruitment.

However, in my talks with people in counterterrorism agencies in other democratic governments, they feel that the sorts of young people who are susceptible to radicalization do not feel that the more moderate figures are at all credible or exciting or interesting. So, they do not really have much sway with the kind of people that we are particularly concerned about.

So, on that note I will stop, and thank you again.

[The statement of Dr. Crenshaw follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARTHA CRENSHAW

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

Chairwoman Harman, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss al-Qaeda's threat to the homeland.

Although al-Qaeda is substantially weaker than it was on the eve of the 9/11 attacks, it still poses an active and immediate threat to the United States and its allies. Uncertainty about future policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan and its effect on homeland security heightens concern.

I have studied terrorism for almost 40 years, and if we look at the big picture of all terrorism over time, most terrorism is local. Targets, audiences, and grievances are local, and for most groups attacking close to home is simpler and easier. Since the late 1960s, anti-American groups have spent most of their time and effort on their home territory, and it was rare for them even to target Americans or American interests abroad, much less mount attacks in the United States. Al-Qaeda is the exception. Transnational reach is central to its identity, and it is organized to carry out this mission. As American military strikes pressure the core leadership in Pakistan, those remaining may grow more desperate to activate supporters in the United States in order to continue the struggle. Local militants may be motivated to act in order to avoid failure and the collapse of the cause. It is likely that al-Qaeda's leaders have given up the idea of a repetition of the destructiveness of 9/11 and would settle for less spectacular but lethal attacks on civilian targets.

My statement analyzes al-Qaeda's current organizational capacity and evaluates its intentions toward the United States.

WHAT IS AL-QAEDA?

Recent estimates place al-Qaeda's strength at around 100 members in Afghanistan and 300 in Pakistan. Others simply say that the numbers are "below 2,000." These varying estimates are misleading, perhaps even meaningless. Al-Qaeda has always been an organization that depended as much on local initiative as on top-down direction, and in the aftermath of 9/11 it has dispersed even more. Its complex organizational structure is something between a centralized hierarchy and a decentralized flat network. It is a flexible and adaptable organization that has survived well beyond the lifespan of most other terrorist organizations.

In my view, al-Qaeda is not a global social movement. I offer this observation because defining it as such implies that it is a popular movement with extensive grass-roots support in its constituent communities. I do not think this is the case. Instead it is a web of overlapping conspiracies, often piggy-backing on local conflicts and grievances. In many ways it is a transnational secret society. Clandestine cells are the norm, not rallies and demonstrations pulling in large numbers of supporters. It cannot mobilize the vast majority of Muslims. Its options are limited.

The structure of the organization can be analyzed on three levels:

- (1) al-Qaeda central in Pakistan;
- (2) the second tier leadership;
- (3) cells (or micro-cells) and individuals.

Al-Qaeda central.—Looking first at "al-Qaeda central," the key issue is leadership and leadership potential. Although the leadership does not control the worldwide organization in a strict sense, it provides ideological direction and guidance as well as some resources (mainly assistance with training and funding). Bin Laden and Zawahiri possess symbolic value. Locally al-Qaeda is a disruptive player in Pakistani politics.

The leadership is reduced in number and many key personnel have been captured or killed (although the fate of the targets of drone attacks in Pakistan is not always easy to ascertain). There can be no doubt that their loss is a serious blow to the organization. It is demoralizing as well as debilitating. In addition communication is impeded. Under pressure it is harder to communicate both within the leadership group and to supporters outside, although it is clearly not impossible since al-Qaeda's media outlet is still operating and video and audiotapes appear regularly.

The key questions on which experts disagree are: Can the removed leaders be replaced? How deep is the bench? If there is no effective succession, can the core leadership continue to function under pressure? Can it continue to communicate with the rest of the organization and with the world, which is essential to survival as an agent of jihad? Is the top leadership essential to mounting terrorist attacks against and in the West?

An immediate policy question is whether the al-Qaeda leadership can survive without a base in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Could it be transplanted to another conflict zone that could provide safe haven, such as Somalia or Yemen? Al-Qaeda has been rooted in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theatre for almost 30 years. Rebuilding a base in a new location would be problematic, perhaps impossible.

But does al-Qaeda need a territorial location at all? One reason for needing a base may be to maintain training camps rather than ensure the functioning of the core leadership. Although experts disagree on this issue (and in fact on most al-Qaeda-related issues), my judgment is that hands-on training is important to the tactical success of terrorist attacks. Expertise in handling explosives, tradecraft, and operational security are learned through experience, not the internet or training manuals.

Another critical question is the nature of the relationships between al-Qaeda central and diverse Taliban factions in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Would we predict alliances or competition? Here again expert opinions differ.

Some analysts predict that if the United States and NATO withdraw, the Taliban will take over in Afghanistan, and al-Qaeda will return to its pre-9/11 home and pose the same deadly threat as before. Pakistan would be likely to make an accommodation with both the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The threat to the American homeland would be grave.

Other observers think that there is no coherent “Taliban” but a mix of local interests, that such a weak coalition is not likely to secure control of the country, and that even if a faction of the Taliban did take power (especially the Mullah Omar faction), it would not necessarily be sympathetic to al-Qaeda and in fact might be hostile. After all, it was al-Qaeda’s recklessness that led to the Taliban’s defeat and loss of power in 2001. Some analysts in this camp expect that pragmatic elements of the Taliban would be willing to compromise with the Afghan government.

Another consideration is that al-Qaeda may not need Afghanistan at all, as long as it can maintain its base in Pakistan. How will American policy choices in Afghanistan affect the Pakistani government’s willingness and ability to confront al-Qaeda? Apparently al-Qaeda has a closer relationship with the Pakistani Taliban than with the Afghani Taliban, and it is the Pakistani Taliban that has committed spectacular acts of terrorism (perhaps learned from or assisted by al-Qaeda) and provoked a military offensive from the Pakistani government. Some commentators argue that we should leave the eradication of al-Qaeda to the Pakistani military and intelligence services. Others think that Pakistan will not do the job, especially considering the high levels of anti-Americanism among the public. In terms of a threat to the homeland, we should recall that the Pakistani Taliban has exhibited a capacity for organizing terrorism outside of the region (e.g., the 2008 Barcelona plot).

The second tier leadership.—It is a mistake to conceive of al-Qaeda as composed of a core leadership at the top and self-generated or self-radicalized volunteers who respond independently to the call for jihad at the bottom. The intermediate level of leadership is equally important to radicalization, recruitment, and the logistics of mounting attacks. Understanding how this structure functions sheds light on the question of whether al-Qaeda’s momentum can be sustained without central guidance from Pakistan or elsewhere.

(1) The first type of interface consists of affiliated or merged local organizations with their own interests in specific conflict zones, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, the revived al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula operating in Yemen, or Al Shabab in Somalia. They are either branches of the central organization or associates that have adopted the al-Qaeda brand or label. In return al-Qaeda central has acquired transnational reach as well as the all important image of a force that mobilizes Muslims around the world. Some of these alliances seem to be fragile, as local affiliates discover the high price of joining. An important part of the al-Qaeda brand is suicide attacks on civilian targets, including Muslims. This requirement has apparently provoked dissension in AQIM and in the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. Nevertheless, a number of attacks and plots in the West can be linked to these groups. They also pose real threats to political stability in Yemen and Somalia.

(2) The second midlevel interface is composed of local leaders in Western countries, often Muslim clerics (e.g., at the Finsbury Park Mosque in London, which drew adherents from across Europe) but including other activists as well. They are public figures, not covert operatives. It is difficult to trace their direct connections to al-Qaeda central, but clearly they have adopted its principles and beliefs. They provide more than just inspiration by calling for jihad against the West. They also organize young men in summer camps, sports clubs, and other venues for socialization, indoctrination, and recruitment. In the years since 9/11 and particularly since the London bombings in July 2005, Western governments have arrested or deported radical clerics and closed down mosques (or assisted in a transfer of control). Recent reports, however, conclude that imprisoned clerics in Britain have maintained contact with their followers outside and continue to issue fatwas in support of jihad. Similarly, in the United States Sheikh Abdel-Rahman communicated from prison with his followers in Egypt.

Recruits and volunteers.—Our concern here is with transnational recruitment in the West rather than recruitment in conflict theatres abroad. Many of the cells in the West, however small, had a leader with connections to higher organizational levels, whether at home or overseas (usually Pakistan in the case of the United Kingdom).

From what little we know, recruitment processes at the individual level vary. Typically it is difficult to establish whether there was a connection between a local

militant and al-Qaeda and to determine who took the initiative in making contact. As seen in the 9/11 conspiracy, the process combines both volunteering and active recruiting by activists or organizers—it is bottom-up and top-down at the same time. This *modus operandi* has characterized al-Qaeda from the beginning. The Mohammed Atta group travelled to Pakistan by accident and circumstance, where Khalid Shaikh Mohammed discovered that they were the perfect instruments for his suicide hijacking plan. It still appears to be the case that some individuals in the West initially intend to travel abroad to fight on behalf of Muslims, but when they arrive al-Qaeda leaders persuade them to return home to attack their own societies.

Key factors in recruitment include family and social ties in the local setting as well as to a country of origin, access to training camps (now primarily in Pakistan), and collective encouragement as well as contacts in institutions such as mosques or even sports centers. Prisons also serve as venues for recruitment (there is no evidence of this in the United States but the European experience suggests that it is common). Social network theory is often used to map out these relationships (usually through friendship and kinship networks). The internet also contributes to radicalization and recruitment, but operational control probably requires face-to-face contact. A recruiter may be in touch with an individual who then reaches out to other individuals to form a conspiracy, or a recruiter may enlist an already-formed group that appears promising. Recruits have included first-generation, second-generation, and even third-generation immigrants as well as converts. Some are citizens, but some are illegal. Some are well-assimilated, well-educated, upwardly mobile, and prosperous, while others are rootless and marginal in a socio-economic sense. Some have criminal backgrounds, some do not. Most participants in these conspiracies are male, and in Western Europe most were initially recruited in their country of residence.

The radicalization process can apparently occur very quickly. Individuals can rapidly move from a secular lifestyle to extreme religiosity and then to the endorsement of violence. It is difficult to predict who will take this path.

The case of Major Hasan and the Fort Hood shootings is a tragic reminder that it is possible for a lone individual to take action unassisted (and that skill with explosives is not necessary). We do not yet know enough to be sure that he acted on his own initiative or what his motivations were, but he was in contact with Anwar al-Aulaqi, a radical cleric formerly preaching at a Northern Virginia mosque, connected to the 9/11 hijackers, and now residing in Yemen. Aulaqi, who is thought to be linked to al-Qaeda, praised Hasan as a hero after the Fort Hood shootings.

An important public policy question, and yet another point of dispute among experts, is whether or not non-violent Islamist-oriented organizations serve as transmission belts for recruitment into underground cells or instead as safety valves that divert potential extremists away from the path to terrorism. Hizb ut-Tahrir, which seeks the establishment of an Islamic caliphate and is estimated to have a million members worldwide, is a prominent case in point. Western governments have taken different positions on this issue, some banning these organizations and others not (usually on grounds of freedom of speech and association).

Possibly these associations are neither effective substitutes for violence nor conveyor belts because committed extremists are impatient with endless philosophical discussion and eager for action. They are not attracted to moderate Islamism and do not find its representatives persuasive or credible. This rejection is an impediment to a policy that tries to end terrorism by encouraging moderates within the same general community of belief to take a stand against violent extremism. However, it is important to remember that those who use violence are a tiny minority.

WHAT DOES AL-QAEDA WANT?

Considering the diversity of perspectives at different levels within the organization, it is not surprising that al-Qaeda's motivations are not necessarily consistent or uniform. There are many currents of jihadist thought. It is also not surprising that the goals of the top leadership level would be couched in vague terms, reflecting their conception of a minimum common denominator. Little concrete attention has been paid to a positive program for the future, although al-Qaeda has grand aspirations for the eventual establishment of a caliphate.

Our interest is in those beliefs and objectives that drive attacks on the United States, especially attacks on or within the homeland. What is the rationale now for attacking the United States? Is it likely to be altered as circumstances and American policies change? For example, would there be a shift if American military forces were withdrawn from both Iraq and Afghanistan?

The narrative promoted by the top leadership—reflected in statements by Bin Laden, Zawahiri, al-Suri, and other spokesmen—is that violent jihad is an obliga-

tory response to encroachments on Muslim lands by the “Crusaders and Jews.” Jihad is considered fundamentally defensive and thus essential as long as Islam is in danger. It is also an obligation at the level of the individual, as authorized by al-Qaeda. The framing of terrorism as a necessary defense against aggression toward the umma (the Muslim community, not al-Qaeda itself) and as an individual duty is coupled with another justification. Al-Qaeda justifies terrorism as a way of making citizens of the West suffer as Muslims have suffered—to establish equivalence or reciprocity by bringing the war home. Communications (audio and video) emphasize the suffering of civilians at the hands of the United States and its allies fighting in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Palestinian victims of Israel are also cited in this context.

These messages constitute powerful and urgent emotional appeals to defend one’s community and one’s faith and to take revenge on their persecutors. Martyrdom is the highest expression of commitment (and since the war in Iraq it has become an al-Qaeda trademark, although suicide attacks began in the early 1980s). There is no indication of a change in the view expressed by al-Qaeda theoretician Abu Mus’ab al-Suri in 2005: The lesson of history is that terrorism is the most useful political method to compel an opponent to surrender to one’s will.

Demonstrating that Muslims in the West can be mobilized in the service of these collective aims is a legitimizing device for al-Qaeda. Sponsoring terrorist attacks in the West is an ideological imperative, essential to the al-Qaeda identity and image. Promoting terrorism in the West is all the more important to their reputation because challenging the United States in the Middle East has failed (e.g., in Iraq), although Zawahiri boasts that al-Qaeda has won in every conflict. The al-Qaeda challenge to Saudi Arabia also collapsed, and Egypt is a lost cause.

Decentralization is also a practical response to pressure. Following the logic that most terrorism is local, instigating local cells to attack the enemy at home is the most effective way of reaching the American homeland. Mounting an attack from abroad is logistically difficult and has not worked well (consider the examples of Richard Reid and subsequently the liquid explosives plot). Al-Suri explicitly acknowledged that dispersion into small units was the most effective way of maintaining the organization and continuing the struggle in face of the effectiveness of post-9/11 counterterrorism.

In asking whether changes in American policy might produce corresponding changes in al-Qaeda’s attitudes, it is instructive to look at al-Qaeda and sympathizers’ reactions to President Obama’s speech in Cairo last June calling for a new beginning. Judging by Zawahiri’s subsequent speeches and the reactions in on-line forums and blogs that take the al-Qaeda line, President Obama’s initiative was interpreted as a threat. Zawahiri was scornful of Muslims who were deceived into welcoming a dialogue or partnership with the West. He appealed to nationalism in both Egypt and Pakistan (interestingly, speaking in English to a Pakistani audience and referring frequently to the military). Jihadist circles also seemed to recognize and to be alarmed by Muslims’ positive reception of the Obama administration. They are aware of declining public support for terrorism against civilians. One theme of jihadist discourse is that Obama’s deceptive sweet-talk and cajoling cannot be permitted to weaken Muslim hatred for the United States. Another theme is that American policy will not change—the new approach renouncing the war on terror is mere rhetoric, and the United States will continue to kill Muslims and to support Israel. An article comparing Presidents Obama and Bush concluded that Muslims should “beware of the cunning Satan, for he is more dangerous than the foolish Satan.” A common view expressed in these discussions is that jihadists must act because of the cowardice of leaders in Muslim countries (Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular), including the ulema or clergy. On-line comments also remind audiences that there has not been a successful attack against a target in the West since 2005. This criticism of their passivity presents a challenge for al-Qaeda loyalists.

Looking to the future, Al-Qaeda will attempt to exploit whatever decision the administration makes about Afghanistan. If troop levels are increased to implement the counter-insurgency strategy, al-Qaeda can point to continued American assaults on innocent Muslims. Civilian casualties are inevitable, no matter how careful and precise American forces try to be. If the United States withdraws, al-Qaeda will take credit.

Is there Muslim opposition to the al-Qaeda worldview? It is the case that some prominent Muslim clerics have taken a strong stand against al-Qaeda’s doctrine (particularly in Saudi Arabia and Egypt). Their critique is unlikely to moderate the views of major al-Qaeda leaders, who distrust the orthodox clergy as much as they distrust moderate Muslim political leaders. Delegitimizing the jihadist message might discourage potential recruits who have not yet moved to violence, but it is almost impossible to know. It is not as though we can count the numbers at recruit-

ing stations. In addition al-Qaeda, and the Taliban as well, typically deflect internal criticism of bomb attacks that kill civilians by evoking conspiracy theories: Instead they charge that the perpetrators are the CIA, the Mossad, Pakistani intelligence, or other shadowy agents of the enemy.

CONCLUSION

Al-Qaeda is declining but still dangerous. It is by no means a mass popular movement but it is a complex, transnational, and multi-layered organization with both clandestine and above-ground elements. It has proved durable and persistent. The determination of its leaders to attack the United States is undiminished and might strengthen as the organization is threatened, but another attack on the scale of 9/11 is unlikely.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Dr. Crenshaw.
General Barno.

STATEMENT OF DAVID W. BARNO (RET.), DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

General BARNO. Madame Chair and Ranking Member, Mr. King, thanks very much for the opportunity to testify today.

I would note upfront that, although I am a Government employee and I direct the Near East South Asia Center at the National Defense University, all my remarks and my testimony today are my personal outlook and opinions and do not represent the U.S. Government or National Defense University.

I would generally agree with most of what I have heard so far from my colleagues. I think, perhaps, one thematic that all of us will sound in one way or another today is the danger that al-Qaeda still represents. I think the risk of us underestimating that danger, in my opinion, at least, is perhaps one of the things we have to be particularly vigilant against here in the coming years.

The events of 9/11 reminded us in no uncertain terms of the cost of unpreparedness in what we now characterize as homeland security. As we all know, just 8 years ago, the Nation suffered its most serious blow ever in a single-day attack by an outside attacker on the United States. Nearly 3,000 American lives were lost here in Washington, in New York, and in Pennsylvania.

That is a day that has changed all of our lives forever, and we cannot forget how that came about, and we cannot be swayed from ensuring that that never occurs again.

I would also note that, in today's environment, I think the emergence of a violent, ideologically driven, non-state actor such as al-Qaeda has really radically altered the calculus of U.S. National defense.

I come from a military background. I grew up in a world where we faced a Cold War threat from the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact in Europe. We are in a completely different world today. I am not sure all of our institutions in looking at the defense of the country have caught up.

Conventional military organizations today provide little defensive or deterrent power against this particular adversary. Law enforcement organizations are demonstrating a lot of difficulty in dealing with these deadly threats, as well, and doing them in a timely manner before attacks have occurred—despite the great successes we have seen here in the United States over the last 8 years.

In reality, of course, our adversary only has to be lucky once, where our defensive measures have to be lucky 100 percent of the time, which is a very tough standard to meet.

I think the ambiguity in this world of non-state threats argues for both a defensive, law enforcement, criminal enterprise, but also an offensive set of tools. Defensive measures we are all familiar with include hardening of potential targets, red teaming our vulnerabilities, and even increased vigilance by our citizens, as well as law enforcement.

I think these measures are necessary, but they are not fully sufficient. Offensive measures to keep terrorist organizations and other malign non-state actors off-balance and under pressure are simply essential.

This is a war. Our enemy views this as a war.

We sometimes view it as a war, sometimes view it as a myriad combination of other issues—perhaps rightfully so. But our enemy views this very much as a war and a multi-generational war. We have to respond to that with the degree of seriousness that it requires.

Defeating al-Qaeda, in my view, will require a long-term American presence in support of our friends in South and Central Asia—especially now, Afghanistan and Pakistan. I think that our presence there will ultimately not be realized by large numbers of U.S. and NATO troops, as is the case today, but our long-term presence should be characterized by American partnership and intelligence, law enforcement, border control, and counterterrorism forces across the region.

I am not sure that day will ever arrive, however, unless we can defeat the ascendancy of the Taliban threat today.

I would view that the Taliban relationship with al-Qaeda today is symbiotic. Sometimes we like to disaggregate these two, but I very much see the two of these having grown together in many ways.

I would describe it as the al-Qaeda fish today in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region swim inside of a Taliban sea in that arena, and that our fight has to be able to take on both of those issues.

I think a long-term partnership with our friends in the region is absolutely essential for our enduring security of the United States. We cannot simply walk away. We cannot withdraw. We cannot disengage from that region and expect our Nation to be safe here at home.

I would close by saying that I share the belief of many others that only our consistent and persistent military and intelligence pressure on al-Qaeda—in many ways enabled by our local presence there in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region—those factors have come together to help prevent a large-scale al-Qaeda attack on the United States in these last 8 years.

There are many other components of this defense, and there are other components of the offense. But I do have concern that our disconnection and our potential disengagement that some are viewing in this region could be very debilitating to our long-term security and works against our interests. Al-Qaeda is still a deadly, threatening, and powerful organization.

Thanks, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of General Barno follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID W. BARNO

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

I am here today in my personal capacity. My remarks reflect my personal opinions, and do not represent the opinions or position of the Department of Defense or the Near East South Asia Regional Center of which I am the Director.

The events of 9/11 reminded us in no uncertain terms of the costs of unpreparedness in what we now term “homeland security.” Just 8 years ago, our Nation suffered its most serious blow ever delivered by a single outside attacker on the continental United States—an attack that cost nearly 3,000 American lives. All of our lives were changed forever, and none of us have ever looked at the defense of the United States in quite the same way since.

Prior to 9/11, the United States had no Department of Homeland Security, and the very idea of defending against threats within the United States fell on the one side to local, State, and National policing agencies, up to and including the FBI—and on the other side toward the Department of Defense in its domestic “Military Support to Civil Authorities” responsibilities—most commonly disaster assistance. The very idea of an organized foreign group such as al-Qaeda possessing the will and wherewithal to conduct a major attack within the United States was simply not fully comprehended.

Our model for dealing with threats to the United States in some ways was organized on two very different lines: Threats from individuals were addressed as “rule of law” issues and dealt with largely as legal responses to criminal enterprises. Organizations aimed against these threats were by and large law enforcement agencies, to include international organizations such as Interpol. In the world before 9/11, terrorism largely fell into this model—events ranging from the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 to the Khobar towers attacks in 1996 to the attack on the USS Cole in 2000. On the other hand, threats from nation-states were seen in the purview of international law and international bodies such as the United Nations and deterred and responded to through largely diplomatic, and if required, ultimately military means. Almost every nation worldwide maintained both intelligence and military organizations purpose-built to defend against these familiar threats. Armies, navies, and air forces could be found in all but the poorest countries, and intelligence organizations aimed at neighbors and internal security threats in most countries around the globe.

Non-state actors such as al-Qaeda have forever changed this threat model—and the world’s law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies have continued to scramble to keep up with this new threat profile. It has become common to measure threat over the last few centuries by the amount of destructive power than can be wrought by ten men (or women). During the 1800s and early 1900s, this potential might play out most often in assassinations of key figures creating strategic turmoil—the lone Sarajevo gunman’s impact on the start of World War I as a case in point. The ready availability of mass destructive technology in the aftermath of World War II began to change that equation. The world-changing impact of the internet—both for the unfettered spread of the most deadly technologies as well as ideological radicalization—is now unmatched by any previous development in human history in giving vast destructive power to even a few committed individuals.

In today’s environment, the emergence of violent, ideologically driven non-state actors such as al-Qaeda have radically altered the calculus of National defense. Conventional military organizations hold little defensive or deterrent power in this model. Law enforcement organizations are similarly demonstrating grave difficulties in addressing these deadly threats—or doing so in a timely manner, before attacks have occurred. Moreover, the adversary only has to be lucky once—our defensive and preventive measures have to be effective—100% of the time to prevent potential catastrophe.

Non-state actors present the dual challenge of attribution and accountability for their acts. The perpetrators of the Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia remained obscure for years, effectively dulling any prospects for a timely and effective response. When a weapon of mass destruction detonates in today’s world, who will be held responsible? How many month or years will it take to establish attribution to a certain group or individual? To then hold that perpetrator accountable? And are there any prospects for any type of deterrence in a non-state threat world where there is no “smoking gun” for sometimes years thereafter?

This ambiguity inherent in a world of non-state threats—and a world where states employ the tactics of non-state anonymity to carry out campaigns of terrorism

or irregular warfare—argues for both a defensive and an offensive set of tools. Defensive measures will include hardening of potential targets, “red teaming” of vulnerabilities, and even increased vigilance by citizens as well as law enforcement—all necessary but not fully sufficient. Offensive measures to keep terrorist organizations and other malign non-state actors off-balance and under pressure are simply essential.

One can argue persuasively that one contributing factor to al-Qaeda’s success in the most deadly surprise attack on the United States homeland in our history was its unmolested safe haven in Afghanistan in the years leading up to 9/11. This sanctuary can re-emerge in the same region today, and not require an entire nation-state in order to return to its former prominence and lethality. The Afghan-Pakistan border areas are the nexus of al-Qaeda today and cannot be allowed to resume their former position as a quiet backwater for al-Qaeda to plot destruction on the United States and our allies unchallenged by western arms.

Defeating al-Qaeda in my view will require a long-term American presence in support of Afghanistan and its key neighbor Pakistan. That presence will ultimately not be realized by large numbers of U.S. and NATO troops as is the case today, but by American presence and partnership in intelligence, law enforcement, border control, and counter-terrorism forces across the region. However, in my judgment this day will never arrive unless the currently ascendant Taliban threat is defeated and our actual and potential allies across the region buttressed by our success. We must characterize our “end game” in the region not as withdrawal, but as a long-term partnership with like-minded nations across this key arc of concern—nations united in the face of a growing menace from non-state terrorists that include al-Qaeda. I see the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda as absolutely symbiotic: The al-Qaeda fish today swim in a Taliban sea in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and in the border region writ large. Any strategy that the United States undertakes which is focused first and foremost on “exit” as the strategy rather than on “success” in meeting policy objectives is a strategy doomed to fail. This is a paradox—a focus on “exit” undermines the very strategy it seeks to achieve.

I share the belief with many others that only our consistent and persistent military and intelligence pressure on al-Qaeda enabled by our local presence and contacts have prevented al-Qaeda from striking the United States once again in the last 8 years. Returning to an “offshore” posture to fight this threat returns us to the wholly ineffective posture of the 1990s, and removes the immense pressure felt by al-Qaeda over the last 8 years of what has truly been a “war” on terrorism waged by a broad collection of nations around the globe. This fight must continue, and it will be made immeasurably harder if it is no longer enabled by the close-up presence of American capabilities in Afghanistan and shared efforts across the border in Pakistan.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the subcommittee, and I look forward to hearing your questions.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.

Thanks to all of the witnesses for excellent testimony and for confining yourselves to 5 minutes.

Given the number of Members who have showed up to ask you questions, we are going to have a very, very full morning.

In accordance with committee rules, I will recognize Members who were present at the start of the hearing based on seniority on the subcommittee, alternating between Majority and Minority. Those Members coming in later will be recognized in their order of arrival.

I also would ask unanimous consent for Ms. Jackson Lee of Texas, and Mr. Lungren of California, to sit on the dais for the purposes of questioning witnesses during the hearing today. They are not Members of our subcommittee, but they are Members of the full committee.

Hearing no objection, so ordered.

Let me now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

First, to Dr. Pillar and General Barno, thank you for your service. Both of you have spent years and years away from your families—one in the intelligence area and the other in our military,

keeping our country safe. We recognize it and salute you both. I think that your service now is even more valuable, because of your service then.

I understand, General Barno, you are still serving, but you were on active duty in the Middle East and in Vietnam. I think that was you.

General BARNO. Too young.

Ms. HARMAN. Too young. Excuse me. I am not too young. Mr. King is not too young.

But at any rate, thank you for your service.

Thank you, Dr. Pillar, for focusing on the fact that both our intelligence community and our law enforcement agencies have played a major role these past 8 years in keeping our country safe. I think we all recognize that. We should also all recognize that some actions that Congress has taken have helped, as well.

Mr. Bergen is nodding.

So, for all the bad stories about Congress, there have been some good stories, as well.

Having said that, as I said in my opening remarks, I think al-Qaeda remains potent. My first question to you is, if we are able, or one of our allies is able, to capture or kill Osama bin Laden and/or Ayman al-Zawahiri, will that make a difference to al-Qaeda's potency?

Any of you feel free to answer.

Mr. PILLAR. I will take the first crack at it.

The largest contribution that bin Laden and Zawahiri make today is not in the operational command and control of terrorist operations, but rather as ideological lodestar, of sorts. To do that, you can do it whether you are dead or alive.

So, the question you raised, Madame Chair, is one that the specialists have debated among themselves a long time. I know when I was in Government, we debated that amongst ourselves a long time.

I think it is a wash, quite frankly. There would be a kind of martyrdom aspect to it, depending on how they were killed, if they were killed. Then, of course, if they were captured, we would face the same issue that has become a point of controversy here with regard to KSM and the matter about which you and Mr. King had your dialogue.

So, on balance, I do not think it works strongly one way or the other.

Ms. HARMAN. Other comments, Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. I am going to disagree slightly with Dr. Pillar. You know, if von Stauffenberg had killed Hitler in 1944 with the bomb under the conference room table, World War II would have ended a year earlier. Not to compare these two conflicts, but there are some people who change history, and bin Laden changed history.

You cannot explain why the French were in Moscow in 1812 without Napoleon. You cannot explain 9/11 or al-Qaeda without bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed may be operationally important, but he has no ideas.

So, and the point—the problem is that bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri keep influencing what happens. It is not just commanders intent to kill Westerners and to kill Jews. But every time they re-

lease an audiotape or videotape, they are often very specific instructions.

For instance, bin Laden has been talking about Somalia a great deal recently. So has Ayman al-Zawahiri. That is one of the reasons foreign jihadis are flocking to Somalia. Bin Laden said, we are going to respond to the Danish cartoons. That is one of the reasons that the Danish embassy was attacked in Islamabad. There are many other examples.

So, I think that they are important in a way that—you know, much more important than anybody else who has been captured or killed so far.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Crenshaw.

Ms. CRENSHAW. I think that they both have enormous symbolic power over the movement, and I think Zawahiri now even more so than bin Laden, because they have not seen any videotapes from bin Laden for quite a long time. My colleagues may know exactly.

Al-Zawahiri issues a stream of videos that I think are enormously influential, and that what we have to understand is the role of communications within the movement, that communications practically define the organization of al-Qaeda.

So, if you cut off those sources of communication, I think that it would have an impact on the movement. Although I think that Dr. Pillar is also right that there might be a sense of desperation in the rank-and-file in the lower levels, if the top leaders were removed—if they believed that they were removed.

Remember the role of conspiracy theories. They might not even believe it, if we said that we had killed them.

Ms. HARMAN. General Barno.

General BARNO. I would just add, I would agree with my last colleague here, that leadership matters, and these two provide inspirational leadership to this organization. Take them off the table, how does this organization perpetuate itself 5 years from now, 10 years from now? Is it going to have that degree of energy?

I think they make a difference, and I think they remain extremely important for—

Ms. HARMAN. Well, thank you.

I am going to respect my own 5 minutes, and I assume other Members will. I would just say that I tend to agree, that they at least have symbolic importance, and there is a communications value to them.

When we were in Pakistan and Afghanistan last week, of course we inquired about whether there are, will be additional opportunities to find these people. Hopefully, there will be in the near future. I think it is quite important.

I would now yield 5 minutes to Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madame Chair.

I have two questions, and I will just address them to the entire panel. So, I will ask the questions up front. They will be on the issues of Muslim leadership in the United States, and also the point that Dr. Pillar was raising about antagonizing a population within the country by our foreign policy.

On the issue of Muslim leadership in the United States, the most recent case, Zazi. One of the only imams in New York who was co-

operating with the New York Police Department was brought in on the Zazi case. He turned out to be a double agent. He took the information and tipped off Zazi.

With the Vinas case on Long Island, which we discussed before, Vinas went to a mosque that he wanted to engage in jihad. He was told, we do not do jihad here. But they never went to the police or the FBI and told them what Vinas was interested in doing.

My understanding of what is going on in Minneapolis, there is very little cooperation from the Muslim leadership in the Somali investigations.

There was the largest mosque on Long Island in New York, 3,000 members, for months after 9/11. These were doctors, professionals. One of them was head of medicine at a medical center, was saying it was the Jews, the CIA, and the FBI that probably attacked Ground Zero.

These are not isolated cases. As I say, I bring up the most recent ones, Zazi and Vinas—especially Zazi.

So, I would ask you to address what you think is the impact of the leadership—or am I giving a distorted view of the leadership—and what the extent of cooperation is.

On the other issue, Dr. Pillar, you raised about antagonizing a population by our foreign policy, and whether or not we agree on any particular war or not, let me just go back to the 1990s, where we had, again, the two open trials in the Southern District on the first World Trade Center attack and also on the blind sheikh.

The only two times we committed troops to war—and I supported both engagements—was in Bosnia and Kosovo, both times on behalf of Muslims and against Christians. They were religious wars between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

We came down on the side of Muslims. There was no oil for us. There was no territorial gain for us. Yet, during that entire time we saw Khobar Towers, we saw the African embassies, we saw the USS Cole and the preparations for 9/11—long before any of the policies that we are talking about now went into effect.

When we talk about Iraq and Afghanistan, if you will, even if we leave those wars aside, we are going to be engaged in long struggles in the struggle with al-Qaeda, whether it is in those countries or somewhere else, there will always be collateral damage. That collateral damage will always be highlighted by the enemy.

During World War II, there was enormous collateral damage in Germany and Italy, but the German-American population and the Italian-American population did not carry out actions against the American government.

So, I am asking, is this unique? Is this different? How do we—if we are going to say, well, because Major Hasan did not support our policy in Afghanistan, we have to be looking out for those type of cases in the future.

Are we doing that to be more aggressive? Or are we doing it to be apologetic?

So, I would put those questions out. Some leading questions, I agree, but I will just ask among the four panelists.

Ms. HARMAN. Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Well, I will just address the second one, Mr. King. Someone like Peter Bergen and my other colleagues know much more about the first.

We are not talking about a single cause here, or resentment against the United States or the inspiration to commit violence against U.S. interests.

I certainly did not intend to suggest that the Iraq war or the Afghanistan war, or any other conflict, is the make-or-break difference with regard to whether people will commit such outrageous acts against us.

Rather than kind of glowing in history, I think we ought to look at the direct evidence in Afghanistan today. Afghanistan had been a welcome oasis of goodwill toward the United States. The opinion polls showed our numbers were up in the 80 percent, something like that—a rarity in the Muslim world.

That has in large part dissipated. You can look at different polls and interpret things a bit differently, but we are nowhere near as much considered a friend as we were some time ago.

Quite clearly, this has to do with the, as you correctly say, inevitable collateral damage. No matter how skillfully our military operations are planned and executed, it is going to happen.

We also have the phenomenon of being viewed as occupiers in Afghanistan, which, among other things, has caused a lot of people to take up arms against us there who have no sympathy or support at for the extreme Taliban ideology, although we often call them Taliban in describing the enemy.

Those are the kinds of sentiments that can very easily go across oceans and across continents to affect our security here in the United States.

Mr. KING. Mr. Bergen.

General.

General BARNO. Let me, if I could, just take issue with that. I would disagree from my own experience in Afghanistan, having been back there several times since, and from my interactions with Afghans here in Washington, to include a former Afghan minister of interior, who is probably going to be returning to provide some help to the government there.

There are a diversity of views on the U.S. and the NATO forces in Afghanistan. But even today, after having been there for 8 years, the opinion polls show that there are over 50 percent levels of support for the military effort in Afghanistan.

The more common refrain that still is the case today—and it varies by region in Afghanistan—but the more common refrain and the more common fear is, the question that I heard regularly, “You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?”

There is a greater fear of us leaving, and leaving them exposed to the depredations of the Taliban, which they know very well from the 1990s, than there is of us being an overwhelming portion of the country.

We are still a relatively modest footprint in Afghanistan. In the northern half of the country, we have a virtually minimal footprint across that whole part of the country, and that area is quite favorable towards the NATO presence and is really not impacted by the insurgency to anything like the degree that the south is.

I think we have to be very careful about broad generalizations about being unpopular in Afghanistan and being viewed as occupiers in Afghanistan. I did not find that the case. I have not seen that to be the case with the Afghans I interact with.

There are areas—and I do tend to agree with David Kilcullen's idea of the "accidental guerilla," that you can go into valleys and be fought, simply because you are in a valley. There is no question about that. But that should not be—I do not think it can be extended to a broader perception across all Afghanistan.

Ms. HARMAN. Very briefly, Dr. Crenshaw, please.

Ms. CRENSHAW. I would just address Representative King's first question. The Islamic faith is very decentralized, and the leadership of mosques is a very localized sort of thing.

So, you know, as the British discovered, sometimes radical elements move in and take over mosques. Hard to tell what their religious credentials are or what kind of support they actually have in the communities.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Mr. King, your time has expired.

I would just observe that, from my travels to the region—and I have been to Afghanistan twice this year—one of the reasons for disaffection with Americans by the Afghan population is the rampant levels of corruption of the Afghan government, and their perception that we should be doing—we, America—should be doing more about that.

I now yield 5 minutes to Ms. Kirkpatrick of Arizona.

Ms. KIRKPATRICK. Thank you, Madame Chair.

My question is to all of the panelists.

More often than not, when there is a discussion of homegrown threat, it centers around the possibility of American residents joining up with international organizations like al-Qaeda. However, we all recognize that there are also many militant organizations and individuals in the United States who would like to cause harm to our country for reasons that have nothing to do with our foreign policy.

In your views, which poses a greater threat to our security? Is it Americans linking themselves to global terrorist organizations, or Americans getting involved with organizations that happen to be purely domestic?

Mr. BERGEN. I think the threat is clearly from people linking up with international organizations. I mean, organizations, by definition, are more effective than individuals.

So, if you can—I think it was very important for Dr. Crenshaw to mention that Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is a group that previously had a rather provincial view of the world, really focusing on the Kashmiri conflict, with its attacks in Mumbai, and now with its plan to attack the Danish newspaper is—and also targeting in Mumbai Westerners and Jews—that there are not just one group which has a global threat potential with al-Qaeda, but also groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, and now al-Shabaab, which is the Somali group that has identified itself as part of al-Qaeda.

So, I think, you know, the biggest threat is when an individual attaches himself to an organization. That is really the problem.

Mr. PILLAR. If I could take a slightly different perspective.

There is not a bevy of domestic terrorist groups to which people can attach themselves, by way of comparison. So, almost by definition, if we are worrying about somebody getting in cahoots with a group, it is a foreign group that we are talking about.

You have to ask where the initiative comes from. I address this in my statement. If someone does reach out to a group, is it the individual reaching out to the group? Or is it the group reaching out to the individual?

In the Zazi case, for example, it appears that he was radicalized during his days selling coffee and pastries from a cart in Lower Manhattan. The training camp business in Pakistan came after that. After all, why would he take—why would he be motivated to go thousands of miles away to a camp, if he was not already radicalized?

Another point I would like to make is, you know, the kinds of operations that we ought to be most worried about, because of the domestic security measures that we have taken and the things that the Chair referred to before. A terrorist spectacular on the likes of—on the scale of 9/11, or even less than 9/11, is a lot harder to do than it was 8 years ago.

That is the kind of operation where the skills and sophistication of a foreign group may be most relevant.

I think what we need to worry about more are the kinds of things we saw with Fort Hood, with the D.C. sniper, who was executed in Virginia last week—low-tech things where the skills that can be imparted by a foreign group are simply less relevant. But that is where we are inherently, unavoidably more vulnerable, given the way our society is structured.

Ms. KIRKPATRICK. Did anyone else want to comment on that question?

General BARNO. I would, I think, agree with all the panelists, that the connection to a foreign terrorist group, particularly al-Qaeda, is much more dangerous in the long term to the United States than the individual, you know, connections here.

Despite what we have seen—and we have seen examples such as Timothy McVeigh and the impact that had. That was in some ways a one-off case. Whereas, we do know we have a global network led by al-Qaeda that is trying to enable these attacks. The very fact that that exists, I think, makes that a much more dangerous prospect.

Ms. KIRKPATRICK. It is interesting that you mentioned Timothy McVeigh, because my district in Arizona borders the county where he lived and hatched the idea. So, of course it is a concern to us in that part of Arizona.

Thank you.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Souder, of Indiana, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. First, let me thank you for this hearing. It is very informative.

A brief comment on Afghanistan. Our popularity probably will drop as we try to tackle the drug lords and the warlords, if they thought they were going to get off scot-free, and then we start to crack down or do some collateral damage, we are likely to go down

a little bit in popularity among their supporters, because one of the challenges is how to get the regional leadership. Then, when you get the regional leadership in, many of them were corrupted for a variety of reasons.

As we actually try to get order, you are not going to probably hit 80 percent in the polls in any country.

I have a core question here. In my district, because unemployment was low before it got really high, because we are a heavily manufacturing area, we had lots of refugees. That in addition to the—early on we had refugees because of Fort Wayne, Indiana's proximity to Detroit, the manufacturing, a lot of Arab immigrants historically, at engineering colleges, and so on—people when the shah fell, the Iranians, lots of other clusters.

Now, for example, we have a community of about 1,500 Bosnians with related gang questions with that. I have the largest Burmese dissident population, four different subgroups.

But in addition to that, for example, I found out as we went into Iraq, we have a Sunni Iraqi mosque. The Shia and the Kurds would not meet with them in my office, because they felt some of the defectors who left early were actually plants, and they were there to target some of the Detroit leaders and leaders of the Shia in my region.

The New York Times published an open source, which then led the group to disappear, but I have lots of Yemenis who have been followed in my region. I have somewhere around 1,500 Pakistanis. Then, the newest thing is, we are one of the largest areas for Darfurian refugees from Somalia, Chad, and East Africa.

Now, many of them came to America because they have been persecuted. Many of them are more patriotic than many of the people who are long-time U.S. citizens, because they love the country, they like the freedom. They escaped the tyranny. They are our best sources.

At the same time, when we see what happened in Fort Hood, we are pretty good at figuring out afterwards. But as I understood Dr. Crenshaw to say in our other briefing that I got upset about, but I heard you say before, that when you track people in London who were going to Pakistan, the difficult thing is how to figure out those who were a possible risk, and those who are not risks.

How do we do this? I mean, it is one thing to go to Facebook afterwards, one thing to try to put it together.

How do we prevent, rather than explain after we are dead?

It is one of the biggest challenges, and I would like your insights on that.

Then, also, if you could throw in why we have not seen IED. We are seeing lots of—we are talking about low-tech, high-tech organization. That does not seem to be that terribly sophisticated. Yet, we are not seeing them, and it is certainly worse.

Ms. CRENSHAW. Well, those are both two very good questions, Representative Souder. You point out quite accurately that there are large numbers of refugees and immigrants with ties to home countries, with experience in conflict zones, with social networks. The vast majority, of course, have nothing to do with al-Qaeda or any desire to use violence whatsoever.

How do you pinpoint those people who might become radicals, who might become extremists in the sense of wishing to use violence?

I do not have a clear or good answer for you, because I think when we look at the individuals in question, and going beyond the 25 so far in the court, there is so much disparity in terms of socioeconomic background, in terms of ethnic origin in the American case. It is really extremely difficult. We certainly need to know quite a lot more about it.

As to why we have not seen more low-tech-type attacks in the United States, whether we call them IEDs, or simply building very unsophisticated explosives—or shootings, like Major Hasan—I have to honestly say I do not have a good answer for that either, except to be relieved that we have not seen more, but to be afraid that there is a certain contagion effect.

When someone breaks a barrier—although we have had shootings before—it is hard to tell when that tipping point comes when someone does something that others look at and say, “I could do that,” and begin to want to imitate it.

So, we need to learn more about what creates that kind of opening of the doors, a kind of release in that sense. I do not think we know enough about it yet.

Mr. BERGEN. On the prevent question, the Zazi case is a very good case to look at, because, I mean, before 9/11, Zazi would have killed probably dozens of Americans. I mean, he was—if the allegation is correct, he was building hydrogen peroxide bombs, the same bombs that were used in the 7/7 attacks in London, which killed 52 commuters.

You know, Bruce Hoffman describes it as potentially Mumbai on the Hudson. But because of the post-9/11 things that were in place, his travel to Pakistan I think flagged him as potentially interesting. There was clearly surveillance of his e-mail accounts, because if you look at the indictment, it said the e-mails that he was sending were a very important part of the case against him.

So, that is sort of really a good-news story about the American Government doing what it is supposed to do.

General BARNO. I think I would just add to that, as well, that it might be worth—we tend to do postmortems on failures. We ought to be doing some postmortems on our successes to identify what were the key factors in concert that allowed us to find out these perpetrators before they actually launched their attacks, and reinforce how important those are to be able to sustain or to be able to be expanded.

Because we know what now works in about four or five, six or seven cases here in the United States over the last year. We ought to pick that apart with as much attention as we are going to give to the failures that we have, I think.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you. The gentleman’s time has expired.

Mr. Souder, I think you have the most ethnically diverse district on the planet.

I would also just observe, consistent with the answers of the witnesses, that this subcommittee has been trying for several years to understand as precisely as we can what turns somebody with radical views, which are protected by the First Amendment to our

Constitution, into someone who wants to undertake violent acts, which are crimes.

Understanding that nexus and trying to intervene just at that point, so that we are not preventing free thought, has been a huge challenge.

We have not figured it out yet, either, Dr. Crenshaw, but we are going to keep trying.

I now yield to Mr. Carney, of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Madame Chair.

I really wanted to thank this very distinguished panel. I mean, it does not get much better, obviously.

I have written down, I think, about 80 questions I have. I do not have time for them. I do have several, and it kind of ties on with what my colleague, Mr. Souder, was saying, and the Chair.

I would kind of like to go back to 9/11. Mr. Bergen and Dr. Pillar, this is probably for you first.

Have we fully investigated, and do you think we fully understand, the domestic links to 9/11? I mean, how did 19 guys, half of which did not speak English, manage to pull off something of that magnitude here without inside help?

Mr. BERGEN. The only comment I have on that is, this was the largest criminal investigation in history. I think they interviewed 182,000 people. They followed up 500,000 leads.

I mean, you know, it is hard to prove negatives. But I think, to the extent that this was the best investigation of a crime in history, and I think the 9/11 Commission report speaks for itself, anybody who helped the 9/11 hijackers did so unwittingly, it seems.

Mr. PILLAR. I would agree totally with that.

Mr. CARNEY. How much has sort of the wall, the bureaucratic wall between FBI, for example, and the CIA, DIA, all the others, how much has this helped, hurt? You know, we certainly have our constitutional protections we want to, obviously, adhere to. But are we safer?

Mr. BERGEN. No doubt. I mean, the National Counterterrorism Center, which I think is a very highly functional entity—and Dr. Pillar, I am sure, can address more of that. But I think the wall has come down.

Mr. PILLAR. The wall was always exaggerated. I have to disagree on this one.

After the trauma of 9/11, we as a country were seeking catharsis in various ways. One of those ways was to reorganize. That is their favorite way of seeking satisfaction here in Washington.

The NCTC to which Peter Bergen refers is doing outstanding work. I think some of the objective—much of the objective—of trying to get people from the agencies you mentioned to sit literally around the same table, they are doing very good work. But at least as many questions were raised, quite frankly, by the December 2004 reorganization.

You still have counterterrorist components at the FBI, at the CIA. Well-intentioned efforts to try to break down interagency barriers may have inadvertently increased some of the difficulty in communicating between people within the same agency, particularly between those who are working explicitly on counterterrorist topics or investigations, and those, such as at the CIA, who cover

other topics that do not have a counterterrorist label, but are very pertinent to emergent threats—people who can follow opposition movements in other countries, for example, that may morph into the next terrorist threat to hit us.

We have not improved that. So, no, I do not think the reorganization made us safer.

Mr. CARNEY. Well, has the mindset of the analysts and the people doing the work changed? Are they thinking a little more, for lack of a better term, I would say, creatively about how our enemy intends to attack us?

Mr. PILLAR. I think there was creative thinking going on for quite some time. What we did not have—

Mr. CARNEY. Oh, I don't know. You know, the intelligence community a number of years ago, before 9/11, actually said exactly the opposite.

Mr. PILLAR. Well, I will need more than a minute and 15 seconds to respond to that.

The huge thing to change on September 12, if you will, in 2001, was political will to do all those sorts of things overseas and domestically—and the Chair has already referred to some of them—that we did not have before. That includes the particular concerns that have been the subject of previous questions, the sorts of investigative powers we have domestically, as well the more aggressive offensive measures overseas.

It wasn't that there was not creative thinking. It was that it takes an outrage like 9/11 to change the political circumstances in this country in order to make these things possible.

Mr. CARNEY. Do we have an adequate number of linguists in the intelligence agencies? You know, how are thinking about—how much mirror imaging was going on in terms of analysis and that sort of thing?

Mr. PILLAR. There are never an adequate number of linguists. Fifty years from now, no matter what you on this committee and people on the intelligence committees do, we will still be talking then—those of us who are still alive then—about not having enough language skills.

Mr. CARNEY. Well, we will see you in 50 years, and we will have that chat.

My time is up, but I have got a bunch of more questions.

Ms. HARMAN. Well, if there is the political will, we will have a second round of questions, because this panel is fascinating.

I would just observe again, based on last week, we have a lot more linguists than we had a year ago, or 2 years ago. We are doing better.

I now yield 5 minutes to Mr. Broun, of Georgia.

Mr. BROUN. Thank you, Chair Harman.

All of us have been extremely concerned about radicalization here in this country. We have had a lot of talks and effort and time spent on that.

But going back to what Mr. King was asking about, the Zazi case, and even with what Mr. Souder and all of us are really concerned about.

We have recently seen that there are Americans with the will and means to go, for example, to the FATA region. They go for

training. They come back to the United States to carry out their terrorist attacks on our own soil.

This cannot be an easy task. It is not like going to London on vacation. The intelligence community would love to have that same kind of access.

How are these Americans doing it? Do we know who they are talking to and how they are connecting with terrorist groups overseas? They do not just go knock on the door and say, "Here I am, I want to be trained," I am sure. They have got to have some access.

What do we know? What do we need to know? How do we get there? How do we stop this pipeline of American citizens or American radicalized, even folks who have come here as immigrants, from getting engaged in this kind of training, getting engaged in carrying out these terrorists attacks in America?

To the panel.

Dr. Crenshaw.

Ms. CRENSHAW. It is a very murky area, as you point out, who is going to go, and then what happens when they get there. I guess I will just point what I think are some impediments. My colleagues would know better than I.

But if they are going to another country, then we may have some of our own intelligence assets there. But we are going to be largely dependent on the government there to tell us what is going on. I know from the British experience that there were a lot of problems with lack of coordination between them and the Pakistanis, leading Britain now to send a unit of MI-5 to Pakistan to try to figure out what is going on when people get there.

I would imagine that when you go to other conflict zones—Somalia, where there is not anybody even there, I would think, who could track what is going on—it would be extremely difficult to see what people do once they get there.

I think it is a key question as to, how would they know where to go and who to go to, unless there had been prior contact. If they are going with the intention of training and fighting jihad where Muslims are threatened and they are fighting, and then they change their minds, they are, in effect, converted now to terrorists who want to go back to their home countries and attack, we do not quite know how that happens, whether they went with that intention or whether they changed their minds along the way.

We certainly need to know more.

Mr. PILLAR. If I could just expand on Martha's last thought. Much of the initial impetus, Mr. Broun, for people going over into these areas and getting mixed up with people of that ilk, has to do with armed conflicts, in which they did not start out with the intention of becoming terrorists to come back and attack targets in their own homeland.

The jihad against the Soviets throughout the 1980s, did this in spades—and we are still seeing the effect of it today—with jihadists of multiple nationalities going there to free what they consider the Muslim homeland against the Soviet invader. Then, some of them—only a small percentage, but some of them—got wrapped up into these other things that worry us today.

Mr. BERGEN. If I could make a comment about that, because I think the American Government has got a pretty good handle on that. Whether it is the Zazi case we told you about, Headley, you know, clearly, e-mail intercepts were helpful in detecting these people and what they were doing.

But I would also raise the issue of Westerners in general traveling to these training camps, because, you know, because of the visa waiver program, if you are a European passport holder, it is relatively easy to come back.

The Associated Press had an interesting story just recently, where the estimate was about 150 Westerners who have been in the tribal regions recently. For instance, I just did a count of 10 German citizens, different German citizens, all of whom appear in jihadist videotapes in the last year or so.

So, the concern should not be just about Americans. It should also be about the Westerners who are going.

In the British experience, 400,000 British citizens go to Pakistan every year for completely legitimate reasons. If 0.01 percent of them are going for jihadi training, you have still got a lot, 40 people.

So that is kind of the problem. It should not be just focused on the American dimension.

Mr. BROWN. My time is about up, but I just want to indicate that this, to me, is just a very strong wakeup call that we need to have human intelligence on the ground, in those areas, in the FATA region, as well as other regions. We have to have those people. I am real concerned that we do not have that kind of intelligence.

I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN [continuing]. Western travel documents—that was interesting—in the camps in Pakistan and elsewhere poses a great threat to our security, and even more of a threat to the security in Britain, whereas Mr. Bergen pointed out, there are so many Britons of Pakistani origin who travel to Pakistan for month-long vacations every single year.

So, I appreciate your raising that. It is something that is critically important. It is very important to the subcommittee.

We are going to have votes in about 15 minutes, I am told. I want to get to everyone. If we do not, we will come back and make sure we do get to everyone.

The order of questions at this point is Himes, who I am going to call on right now. Mr. Pascrell will be next. There is no one on that side, and then Mr. Green.

Mr. Himes.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you to the panel for appearing before us.

Representing southern Connecticut as I do, we were particularly involved with the events of 9/11. So I think this topic is one that is both critical to all of us, but particularly hits home to an awful lot of people that I represent.

I have got two questions that are kind of in the, “Are we doing enough?” category.

With respect to what we as a Government can do to advance what seem to be positive numbers within the American Muslim community, the revulsion against extremism, are we doing enough?

What else could we as a Government do to tamp down the likelihood that out of that community there would be radical elements emerging?

General BARNO. I think one of the interesting things—I will jump in here—that came immediately in the aftermath of the attack at Fort Hood, was elements of the American Muslim community coming out and condemning those killings unequivocally within—literally within hours on the first day.

I think that is a positive indicator. But to your point, are we doing enough, I think that this is also an opportunity to do a reappraisal of where we are collectively in our law enforcement and Government relations with the American Muslim community to re-emphasize the importance of leadership among American Muslims on the unacceptability of this outlook, and really to condemn the very outlook that ostensibly Major Hasan had about U.S. forces overseas, and the legitimacy of attacks against those forces.

So, I think that message cannot be given enough. I think that the Government and our law enforcement agencies have to be actively involved in having that conversation with the leadership in the U.S. Muslim community.

Ms. CRENSHAW. I would add that it is critically important for local law authorities and local political authorities to understand who the influential people are in the Muslim community.

Because I know at least in the British case, there has been criticism that the people that the police and other authorities chose to deal with did not really speak for anybody. The Government thought they did, but the local communities did not think they did. So, that made their efforts misplaced, and probably more damaging.

So, you have got to know something about who would be the people who would shape opinion in the community.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you.

So, a similar question. One of the disheartening things in the last 8 years has been the silence, frankly, of global leaders, moderate political leaders of Islamic nations, clerics, senior clerics.

Do we have the standing and the ability to urge, encourage, incite global Islamic leaders to take a more aggressive stance against their own extremists? If we do have that standing and capability, what is the path? How do we do it?

Mr. BERGEN. I think the short answer is “no” to that, because of the kiss of death problem. You know, it is happening anyway, is the good news. Dr. Crenshaw referred to this in her testimony.

Salman al-Oadah, who is a very extreme Saudi cleric, who has been in prison for 7 years—an old friend of bin Laden—has publicly rejected bin Laden on a very, you know, on television programs throughout the Middle East. This is incredibly important, because this is a guy that bin Laden, by his own account, said was the reason that he started attacking the United States, because of his fatwas.

So, there are many other examples of clerics, significant militant clerics, or former friends of bin Laden, who have actually turned against him publicly. So, they are really losing the war of ideas.

If you look at support for suicide bombing in the Islamic world, in Pakistan it has dropped from 33 percent to 5 percent in the last

several years. It has cratered in Indonesia, in Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

So, at the end of the day, that is important, but it is not sufficient, because Brigade Rosse, Baader-Meinhof Gang in the 1970s had zero public support, but were still able to continue to be very violent groups.

But clearly, they are losing the war of ideas. I think that our role in that is just to let it happen and be cognizant of it, but not to try to control it.

Mr. PILLAR. I agree with that. The only thing that would give us better standing, to take a somewhat more active role, would be—well, we are talking about the indirect effects of countless perceptions of countless policies around the world. That goes far beyond the immediate war of ideas.

But I agree with Peter, that the kiss of death problem would make our efforts counterproductive for the most part.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you for allowing us to sit in.

The one thing I am concerned about—and Fort Hood was brought up—one thing I am concerned about, since I have been called an apologist at times, is that we do not simply try to do the politically correct thing, because Dr. Hasan is Muslim, to me, means he should be treated no differently than anybody else. I think that would be wrong. I do not think that is happening yet—either way.

The fact that he is Muslim is secondary to the fact that he killed Americans. It looks like he did anyway.

Having said that, Eric Hoffer wrote an interesting book 40 years ago, 45 years ago, “The True Believer,” where he went into the very depths of what makes folks go off the edge and turn away from their humanistic qualities and become basic animals, and to kill their brothers and sisters. What idealism would bring someone to that end? We could learn a lot about it.

These are many times individual efforts, which become subordinate perhaps to organizations that folks attach themselves to.

I live in probably an interesting district also. It is probably one of the most diverse districts in the United States, and it is the second-largest Muslim population in the country. I have a large Jewish population in my district, too. But I was a mayor previous to this life, and you learn to deal with those things on a day-to-day basis. In fact, that becomes your most important and significant problem.

So, when I hear statements like, as you said, Mr. Bergen, being complacent with American Muslims, what do you mean by that?

Mr. BERGEN. I think because of the fact that American Muslims are better educated than most Americans, have higher incomes and do not live in ghettos, unlike their European Muslim counterparts, I think the assumption was this was not going to be a big problem in the United States. I think that assumption is still largely a fair one.

But the Zazi case, the Vinas case, the Fort Dix case—these cases all show that there is a constellation of terrorism cases with a jihadi flavor that suggest that we should not be completely complacent about this problem existing here.

You know, I grew up in the United Kingdom, and so, clearly, the United Kingdom faces a very severe threat—

Mr. PASCARELL. I am not talking about being complacent with, just in general. But I go back to your words. You talked about complacency with Muslims.

Don't you think that that brings a lot of folks over the edge that would wonder that we paint with a wide brush? Doesn't this do more damage than good?

Would you disagree with me on that?

Mr. BERGEN. I may have inartfully worded my comments, for which I apologize.

Mr. PASCARELL. Fine. Thank you.

Now, what do you mean, General Barno, by "increased vigilance by citizens"? How do you define that?

General BARNO. I think that is something that occurred across the Nation after 9/11. I think that that continues to be the case today.

I have not dug through each of these cases over the last year that have resulted in arrests of prospective terrorists in the United States. But in many of them, there were indications that ordinary Americans at checkout counters and other places were being more alert than they would have been, perhaps, 10 years ago to the prospects of something not quite right going on.

I think that is something we have to continue to encourage. I mean, that should not be aimed at any particular group, but the idea that there is a terrorist threat to the United States, inside the United States, is important for all of us to continue today. We did not have that outlook 10 years ago.

Mr. PASCARELL. I want to continue on your point.

I have found no greater vigilance in the general population than with the Muslim community. In fact, in my district, which the FBI has been deeply involved in, I get glowing reports about the cooperation they are getting from imams.

I think, again, to paint with a wide brush those—what you folks have been talking about, brings us closer to the abyss, where we should be trying to reach out—and they should be trying to reach out. This is a two-way street here.

The silence of the political leaders does not exist in my community. I think I have no better source than the FBI. I take their word for it.

I just want to conclude by this, Madame Chair.

This is dicey, serious, dangerous business. Until we get beyond our words, including myself, and deal with the fact that we need strong espionage efforts—I am not afraid to use that word, by the way. For some reason it has been wiped off our dictionaries. It is not politically correct.

I think it is absolutely necessary that we have strong espionage efforts to uncover anyone who is plotting in any way against this country. We need those efforts not only here, but we also need

them primarily, of course, in other countries, which are many times the source of our own problems.

I hope that Fort Hood will be a clarifier. I really do. I think that some good can come out of this great tragedy.

Thank you.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell. Let me just comment on what you said.

I think Congress has acted—I said this earlier—since 9/11 to strengthen the tools available to our intelligence community and our law enforcement community.

Maybe you are right, Dr. Pillar, that our first instinct is to reorganize. So, I plead guilty. But we have done more than just reorganize. I think those tools are yielding information that is crucial, specifically in the Zazi and Headley cases.

I now yield 5 minutes to Mr. Green, followed by Ms. Jackson Lee. I think that that will have given every Member a chance to ask questions. Votes are coming, and that would mean that our witnesses would have to wait around for a long while. So, I would like to suggest that following these two sets of questions, we adjourn the hearing.

Is there any objection to that?

Thank you.

Mr. Green.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madame Chair. I absolutely concur with you. I thank the witnesses for appearing. I thank you and the Ranking Member for this hearing.

I would like to focus our attention ever so slightly on Pakistan. It is my contention that General Kayani is the key, that in a fledgling democracy such as Pakistan, where the rank-and-file of the military have not acclimated to civilian rule, the generals still maintain an inordinate amount of influence, as was the case with his predecessor, Musharraf.

My question is, to what extent are we—with the understanding that it is an independent state, that it has sovereignty, that all of its agencies of government have to be respected—to what extent are we focusing on Mr. Kayani, such that we can better understand his commentary?

I read as of late some very strong language—to some extent, depending on what acid test you utilize for strong—but some language that connotes a dissatisfaction with some of our aid.

I welcome anyone who would like to respond.

Mr. BERGEN. I think, just to comment on Pakistan, I mean, the center of gravity in this conflict is Pakistan. That is where al-Qaeda is. That is where the Taliban is.

Pakistani public opinion is doing a 180, and this affects Kayani and everybody else, which is, what was seen as helping the United States in a war on terror, which they had—you know, they did not really want to be involved—in the last year has changed very dramatically.

So, the attack into Waziristan was done with the full support of the Pakistani population. The attack in the Swat earlier this year was done with the full support of the Pakistani population, because the Pakistani population has turned against the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and these other jihadi groups.

Has that turned into support for the United States? No. This is still one of the most anti-American countries in the world.

But do we really care, if, at the end of the day, our interests and their interests are more closely aligning? It does not mean that they are going after the Quetta Shura necessarily, but it does mean that they are going after people who are attacking us right now in Afghanistan.

So, I think that there is really kind of a bright future in this particular area.

Mr. GREEN. Ms. Crenshaw, yes, if you would, please?

Ms. CRENSHAW. Well, to answer that question, I guess I am less optimistic than Mr. Bergen. I think that that is a really big question as to whether the Pakistani military under Kayani, given a lot of sympathy for the extremist movement among some elements of the military, whether they will continue.

You know, the question I have is, what possessed the Pakistani Taliban to start attacking civilian targets, and thus provoke the wrath of the military, and how long this will last? So, I am not quite so optimistic.

Mr. GREEN. Yes, sir.

General BARNO. Well, I would just add, I know General Kayani personally. I went to the U.S. Army Command and Staff College with him many years ago, which is a tribute to our international military education program, which was absent for a period of time after that, as we all know.

He, in a lot of ways, I think, is the exemplar of where we would like the Pakistani military leadership to go. He is pulling, sometimes kicking and screaming, some of the subordinate officers in his direction.

He has got a very close relationship with Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who has gone far out of his way to spend time with him, both here in the United States and in Islamabad, and also, to promote programs to bring Pakistani officers here, part of which I am involved with, to help them better understand U.S. foreign policy, National security, what we are doing in counterinsurgency.

So, I think he is a bright light there that is very, very helpful. He is going to make statements that are very much in the national interests of Pakistan. But at the end of the day, I think he is very much a good-news story for our goals there.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madame Chair. I will yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Green.

I would just observe that, based on a visit last week, I think the Pakistani military is impressive, and they are targeting terror groups. However, there seems to be a line between terror groups that attack them and terror groups that don't. Some of the "don't" group is still attacking in Afghanistan—attacking both Afghani military and our own troops. So, there is work to do. That would be my observation.

The vote has been called.

Ms. Jackson Lee, you get the final 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Madame Chair, for your courtesies, and to the Ranking Member.

In particular, Chair Harman, let me say that you are very much a part of the improvement that we have made in intelligence gathering since 9/11. So, thank you very much.

Let me focus in on human intelligence.

Thank you, Mr. Bergen, for clarifying your comments in response to Congressman Pascrell's questions. You are not suggesting a broad profiling of Muslim Americans.

Mr. BERGEN. No.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me carry, then, as it relates to Major Hasan and the whole Fort Hood issue. I think it frees us up to ask a question about human intelligence. I would ask your commentary on what has been in the public domain about what we knew of him.

The point that you made that the military is a very likely target, maybe you meant overseas. But let us just say that we look at Fort Dix, and now Fort Hood.

What do you think we were missing in our advanced thinking? Living in a climate that Great Britain lives in, what were we missing in America in terms of not containing Major Hasan?

I frankly believe it is a question of intelligence and sharing that intelligence. Do you have an assessment of that?

If we take away, or have not looked at, or hold as a block the potential of his mental state, which I cannot judge at this point, but just the information that is in the public domain.

Mr. BERGEN. Well, certainly, the FBI was looking into his internet postings, as you know, about suicide bombings and his inquiries about the killings of innocents. They determined that this was not a subject—that the subject was within the realm of his normal activities as a psychiatrist dealing with Army veterans.

Was that a mistake? It turns out that was a mistaken assumption. Was it a reasonable assumption at the time? Probably.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But in the backdrop of what you are suggesting, the al-Qaeda amongst us, do we need to have a higher sensitivity that, as we look at that, wouldn't that have been appropriate for there to be quite a bit of exchange between the intelligence community, the military, and maybe the FBI?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, maybe. But just a comment. You know, since 9/11, there have only been probably two jihadi terrorist attacks in the United States—one by an African American convert to Islam in Little Rock, Arkansas, and one by Major Hasan.

The sum total of Americans who died in these attacks is eight. Of course, those are all tragic. But, I mean, we have actually been pretty lucky. One of the reasons we have been pretty lucky is not because we are lucky, but because the kinds of things that you are suggesting we should be doing, are being done.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So, you think, in light of this particular hearing, that there does not need to be an increased sensitivity and look at a Major Hasan in a different light?

Mr. BERGEN. I would say, the one thing that we still lack in the human intelligence realm is penetration of al-Qaeda itself. That to me is more important than the kinds of things that—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. That would be penetration worldwide, or here in the United States?

Mr. BERGEN. I am talking about overseas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So, that work needs to be done.

Let me ask quickly about Afghanistan mixed with Pakistan. Are they intertwined? Does one rise and the other rises, and the other one falls and the other falls?

General, are they intertwined in terms of the efforts that we need to make in both intelligence and tactics?

General BARNO. I think they are intertwined, and they are really one theater of war, in a sense. There are different challenges, and there are nuances in both places. But if you looked at this from the enemy's standpoint, they would very much view this as a single theater, as a single fight.

We have to step back occasionally and not simply put the conventional borders on those countries, but look at it how our adversary looks at it, to make sure we are coming with a strategy that will defeat his strategy.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, would anyone take me up on the point that I think there is a basic desire for democracy amongst the Pakistani people? Maybe based on their history, based on my interactions, there are these elements.

How do we separate or push the democracy-loving people, even if there is a question about civilian rule versus military rule, so that we can encourage that democracy-building in Pakistan?

Dr. Crenshaw.

Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Any time we push, then we get back to the kiss of death problem. There was the earlier discussion about General Kayani. Absolutely, you know, the Chief of Army Staff in Pakistan always is one of the most politically powerful people in the world, even if we are not in one of those periods of direct military rule.

But once we start pushing, people start pushing back.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Okay. My pushing term, let me draw that back and say "encouraging" and "suggesting" that they have democratic tendencies in the civilian population.

Yes, Dr. Crenshaw.

Ms. CRENSHAW. I do not want to sound too pessimistic, but it is the case that when we did try to offer them aid with very small strings trying to encourage more civilian influence, we got a pushback on that end.

I will also point to the high levels of corruption in Pakistan, in addition to various autocratic tendencies. I think it is an enormous challenge.

The general is quite right, that we have to see the two countries as part of a regional theater.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madame Chair, I just want to say this on the record. You know I co-chair that Pakistan Caucus and also the Afghan Caucus. I continue to have this battle.

I think we need to work more with Muslim Americans, Pakistani Americans and others in a more visible way that translates to the civilian populations, in Pakistan in particular, to say that we are friends and democracy is good. I hope we can do that as we move on human intelligence.

I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. I thank you for yielding. Let me observe that I share your view. It is not inconsistent with also being aggressive against specific threats.

Having been there last week, I observed a lot of positive steps, both on the civil society side and on the military side, that we are taking in Afghanistan, in particular. We do not have military on the ground in Pakistan, but we do have efforts on-going.

It was really, for example, heartening to be in Swat, which has now been taken back by the Pakistani government, and to see girls in school again, and to see the NGO community, which we actively support, engaged in rebuilding the girls' schools which were destroyed by the Taliban.

So, there are positive efforts. I think they matter.

Let me just close with this observation. I think, as some of you have observed—I think it was Dr. Pillar—we cannot win—whatever winning means—militarily against these threats. That doesn't mean our military does not have a role, but it is not the way we will succeed in this era—what I call an era of terror.

We have to win the argument with the next generation and persuade them against this particular set of activities. To do that, I think we have to live our values. American generosity matters. The fact that we helped with the devastating earthquake in Pakistan was a big deal—similarly in Iran.

So, there are things we can do way outside of the military and intelligence sphere that will have a big impact on how the future goes. It is a tough set of challenges.

This panel was spectacular. I want to thank you all for excellent testimony and very good answers to very good questions.

I want to thank the subcommittee and the full committee for what you brought to this hearing.

We are going to have more of these, and we are going to try in the most careful way we can fashion to engage this very tough question of what changes someone with radical views into a violent killer, and especially focus on America, because there are new threats. I am aware of them among us. We want to be sure that we prevent and disrupt as many as possible, not just respond to them.

Having no further business before the subcommittee, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:36 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

